

# RELIGION IN LIFE

A CHRISTIAN QUARTERLY of opinion and discussion

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VOL. XXVIII

Summer, 1959

No. 3

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## Editorial

IT IS NOT SO LONG AGO that Wendell Willkie gave us the phrase "one world" to describe the inescapable contemporary fact that the inhabitants of east and west, north and south, all constitute one interdependent human race—whose economic, social, and political life can no longer be seen as separated from and uninfluenced by what happens anywhere on this planet. The symposium in this issue has to do with one very important—indeed the most important—aspect of this new fact of our unitary manhood; for we are now witnessing the impact of the religions of "the East" on lands like our own, hitherto regarded as securely "Christian."

These are no longer "foreign" religions; they are finding a home in our own land and are showing a missionary zeal which requires of us both a knowledge of their teaching and an understanding of their appeal to those brought up in what we like to think of as a "Christian culture." In the following essays we can learn something about these matters; and we can also learn something of the various ways in which those of us who profess and call ourselves Christians can meet the new challenge which the "mission to America" presents to us.

The Christian believes that he has been given, through the grace of God, not only new truth about God but a new presence of God with men and a new power from God for men; this is what it means to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior, "God manifest in man," "the Word made flesh." But the Christian, if he really believes in the God who has done this, cannot dare to claim that God has left himself "without witness" in places where the name of Jesus is not known. There is "that of God" in every human heart, however it has come to that heart; and it is on that firm foundation of God's presence to all his human children that the specifically Christian affirmations can alone securely be built.

For what is at stake here is our doctrine of God. Is God a provincial being, revealed only to a select few, or is he the God of the whole earth? The Bible, with all its claim for the speciality of that which God did among the Jewish people and in Jesus Christ, is vigorous in its assertion that he is indeed the God of the whole earth. And further, the Christian Church has never been afraid to expose its gospel to all people, because it is confident that God, and God in Christ, does not need *our* protection; *he* is our strong defense and our protector.

Surely it is, or it ought to be, of Christian faith to know that in any free and open encounter in our new "one world," we may learn much of God's generous self-giving to others. At the same time we are sure that the "love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" is so compelling, so self-validating, so gloriously true, that it can and will bring even the other faiths into captivity to it—not by force but by the only power which God uses to win men: the power of self-sacrificing love.

W.N.P.



# The Mission to America

## I. The Comprehensive Teachings of Vedanta

SWAMI AKHILANANDA

THE MAIN RELIGION of India is known in the modern world as Hinduism. According to the people of India, it is really Vedantism or Vedaism. The word "Hinduism" was created partly by the Greeks about 300 B.C., and used later on by the Persians and English. The basic principle of Vedanta is: "Truth is one; men call it by various names." This statement was made in the earliest Vedantic scriptures, the Rig Veda.

According to Vedantists or Hindus, religion, philosophy, and psychology are interrelated. They empirically discovered that Truth is one, through their spiritual practices of the techniques of verification. They rationally established from a philosophical point of view that there is one Ultimate Reality and that is the permanent entity. Everything that we call the phases or aspects of the world is really the manifestation of that Absolute, and the phases are relative. The only permanent entity in the universe is the Absolute or Truth, or, as the Vedantists call it, Brahman. So according to Hindus, philosophy furnishes the intellectual background of what is known as religion. Religion is the verification of the intellectual conclusion.

Herein lies the utility of psychology. In India, psychology gives us a comprehensive view of the total mind, as the Gestalt psychologists of the West are trying to find out. Professors William James, Gordon Allport, William McDougall, O. Hobart Mowrer, and such other personalities in the West have been also trying to understand the total mind. In India, psychology does not merely give us the intellectual understanding of various aspects and levels of the mind, but it also gives us methods of integrating the total mind.

Indian psychology from ancient times has been studying not merely various functions of the conscious state and sense-perceptions of different

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types existing in time, space, and causal relationship. It has also a very clear understanding of the unconscious state of mind. In fact, according to Indian psychology, the major part of our conscious activities are determined and stimulated by the unconscious contents of the mind. Modern Western psychologists and psychiatrists since the days of Charcot, Janet, Freud, Adler, Jung, and others, also say that conscious activities are really determined by the unconscious drives and urges. Hindu psychologists agree with them, but they give us a very broad view of the nature of the unconscious. According to them, the unconscious state of mind does not merely contain the repressed tendencies of the primitive urges, but it also has the residuals of the experience of past lives, as well as inherited tendencies of the family, the culture, and the race. Jung expounds this point in a very interesting way in his interpretation of the collective unconscious.

The study of psychology is vitally important not merely from an intellectual point of view but also from the religious point of view. Hindu psychology discovered the techniques of re-educating and rebuilding the unconscious. Unless we rebuild the unconscious, the old tendencies will remain predominant. Then we will not have an opportunity to reach the understanding of the third state of mind. According to Hindu psychologists, this third state is called the superconscious or *samadhi*. In fact, the superconscious state of mind really gives what the Judeo-Christian leaders call revelation. Hindu psychologists say that revelation is direct and immediate experience of the Ultimate Reality. Hindus also give various stages of the superconscious and the methods of attaining to them. In addition, they give valid understanding of what the parapsychologists of the West call extrasensory perception. These extrasensory perceptions need not necessarily be superconscious experiences or experiences of God. They may be on the ordinary level as we perceive the sense data. The only difference is that we perceive things in extrasensory perception without any direct sense-contact with them.

As long as the mind remains restless and full of conflicts and tensions, it cannot comprehend what is known as God or the Absolute. So they have developed the techniques of concentration and unification of the mind, knowing that without that one can not empirically verify the philosophical or theological conclusion of the Absolute. As philosophy gives us the rational basis of the search after Truth, religion teaches us the methods of verification of the Truth; the higher aspect of psychology trains the mind and makes it one-pointed, single, by integrating and harmonizing the

emotions. Hindu psychology does not advocate repression or mere sublimation. It goes a little farther and teaches us how to rebuild our total mind through re-education without repression and sublimation. Sublimation is no doubt a good thing, yet we have to go farther and completely rebuild the total mind, conscious and unconscious, so that we can have valid super-conscious experiences.

## II

In India, to the teachers of Vedanta, religion means not mere observance of rituals and ceremonies, acceptance of creeds and doctrines, but it means verification of the Ultimate Reality. And philosophy, religion, and psychology are interrelated to give us the understanding of the Truth or Reality.

This does not mean that they discard the utility of rituals, ceremonies, creeds, and doctrines. These are required for some persons for the preliminary training in the process of verification. In Indian tradition we find the most primitive type of religious practices as well as the highest intellectual or what they call monistic type of spiritual practices.

There is tremendous freedom of religious practices in Indian tradition. They feel, as we mentioned, that "Truth is one; men call it by various names." And this Truth can be verified by various ways, of which the principal four are called Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, and Raja Yoga.

1. *Bhakti Yoga*. There are persons who are basically emotional. They establish an emotional relationship with the personal aspect of God and thereby they unify the mind by the cultivation of love and thought of that aspect of God. Hindu religious teachers tell us that each one can establish a loving relationship with the personal God in his own way. God can be taken as father, mother, friend, master, Lord, beloved, and even son. They give tremendous freedom to individuals, knowing that different individuals have different structures of mind and different emotional tendencies. Instead of condemning our basic tendencies, they tell us how to use the dynamic power of emotions. So they suggest that we establish a relationship that is suitable to our individual tendencies and temperament.

They also advocate what is generally known as worship and other such practices in order to cultivate love for God. They hold that there have been many incarnations of God on earth: Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Ramakrishna and others through whom God was made more real to man. It is a fact that we do not see just now in the world any such incarnation of God, nor can we visualize the symbols of God as they are used in Jewish,

Islamic, some Buddhistic and such other traditions. But these practices enable us to think of a personal God or a symbol of God, and they also enable us to become established in loving relationship with God. Then we realize the Truth.

2. *Karma Yoga*. There are persons who are basically active. Hindu teachers tell them they can realize God by performing their duties as a wife or husband, father or child, laborer or management man, doctor or nurse, in the spirit of service and dedication. If anyone performs his duties without any attachment, without the thought of personal gain, he can realize God. In Indian tradition a housewife, a butcher, a king, and a doctor realized the highest Truth by performing their duties without attachment.

3. *Jnana Yoga*. Again, there are some persons who are basically intellectual, scientific, or philosophical. Vedantists teach them a method of analysis and practice of concentration through which they can realize the Truth. They do not have to perform any ritual or accept any doctrine. They can rationally develop their power of concentration and integration of emotions, and thereby they can reach the Truth. There have been many who have reached the highest goal even though they were originally skeptic or agnostic, by the use of rational method.

4. *Raja Yoga*. There are persons who are by nature introspective or meditative. Hindus teach them to concentrate their mind (a) on an aspect of God or personification of God like Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Ramakrishna, the Divine Mother, or (b) on a symbol of the Absolute, if they happen to be rationalistic and cannot "take" a personal God, but at the same time cannot think of the Absolute. They cannot of course do the latter, as the Absolute is beyond the finite mind. It may seem contradictory and paradoxical, yet it has been found that these rationalistic, meditative persons can reach the highest illumination by training the mind to think of a symbol of the Absolute. (c) Again, there are persons who are skeptical or agnostic, even atheistic. Vedantists advise them to make the mind empty, a vacuum, as some of the early Buddhists advocated.

The last method is not generally given. It is given only to very exceptional persons, as there is a risk of becoming negative by making the mind empty. Besides, it is difficult to keep the mind empty, because the moment we try to do it the contents of the unconscious come up to the surface. So we say that it is easier for one to fill the mind by the positive methods of meditation, namely, the use of the personal aspect of God or symbol of God as the object of concentration. By filling the mind with new

and higher thoughts, we can wipe out the disturbing elements of the unconscious without creating any dryness, negativeness, and emptiness. In fact, it has been found out that the first two methods of positive type are generally practiced by the majority of the seekers after Truth belonging to different religions. The *Bhagavad Gita* and Patanjali's *Raja Yoga* popularize the Vedantic ideas of spiritual practices of various types suitable to different individuals in different ways.

### III

Sri Ramakrishna, who was born in 1836 and passed away in 1886, followed different types of spiritual practices taught by the Hindus, devotional and intellectual, and reached through each the same state of God-consciousness which is known as *samadhi* (or as James calls it, "superconscious," and Sorokin "supraconscious"). He then wanted to verify the same truth by following Christian methods, Islamic methods, and others, and came to the same experience as he did by following Hindu-Buddhistic methods. So he declared that all these religions are the doors to the same Truth. Jesus declared: "I am the way." Sri Ramakrishna came to the conclusion that Jesus and other religious leaders belonging to other religions are the ways to the same Truth. After his empirical verification, he declared: "God as Absolute can be comprehended in various ways, and these various ways and the various experiences are of the same Truth."

He and the previous Hindu teachers declared that ethical living is absolutely necessary in order to train the mind to verify the Truth. Ethical life, welfare work, and humanism are not the goal of religion, but they are the preliminary steps to the religious goal, namely, the empirical verification of the Truth.

The question arises in the minds of many thinkers in the West if there is any use of Vedantic teachings in the Jewish and Christian traditions. Our answer is this. Vedantic religion developed many thousand years before the advancement of all these religions, and developed the techniques of intellectual culture, psychological development, and emotional integration. Vedanta does not want to convert anyone from Christianity, Judaism, or Islam, but Vedanta only offers techniques of methods of verification so that the people can follow the Christian or Jewish traditions and at the same time verify the Truth.

Swami Vivekananda (Sri Ramakrishna's disciple) came to America in 1893 to represent Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions. Since then he, his colleagues, and his followers have been trying to show that there is

no real conflict between science and religion. Real religion, whether we call it Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, or Confucianism, teaches us how to verify the Truth. As we already mentioned, rituals and ceremonies are only steps; they are needed for the development of the individual in some cases. A scientist tries to verify the objective truth. Science is based on reason and empiricism. Real religion, according to Vedanta, is also based on these two factors. The Vedantic teachers are offering the methods so that there will be a harmony of religion and science. Through our experiences in Massachusetts Institute of Technology and some other scientific, philosophical, psychological, and psychiatric organizations, we are convinced that the Vedantic teachings of verification of Truth are breaking the wall between science and religion.

We can illustrate this through our experiences in the Society for Scientific Study of Religion and the Institute of Religion in the Age of Science. We find that many of the scholars, especially physical scientists of various schools, seem to be inquisitive about the contributions of Vedanta in religion. Some psychologists like Dr. Allport, Dr. Mowrer, Dr. J. McVicker Hunt, and some sociologists like Dr. Sorokin and others, as well as psychiatrists like Dr. Dana Farnsworth, Dr. Emil Guthiel, Dr. Warren Engels, and others are showing deep interest in the contributions of Vedanta not only in sociology and general psychology, but also in psychotherapy. There are many other social scientists whom I did not mention who are also showing openness of mind. It seems to us that the contributions of Vedanta in this respect will help to remove the antagonism between science and religion in the West. (Unfortunately many Eastern scientists were brought up in Western tradition and were also affected by this conflict.)

The following instance will help to clarify this idea. In one of the conferences of the Institute of Religion in the Age of Science, a mature retired natural scientist was criticizing religion. In one session of that conference the chairman asked me to make comment. I asked this great scientist if he had ever asked himself a question about his own nature, the nature of the universe, and whether there is an Ultimate Reality behind this changeable world. He at once answered, "Yes, I do ask these questions." So I smilingly said to him, "Then you are not an atheist as you seem to think. You may be a skeptic or agnostic, as you are searching for the true nature of yourself and true nature of the world." The elderly gentleman smiled and accepted my humble comment. Then I told him, "Perhaps you are an early Buddhist." He began to laugh: "Did you notice that I did not criticize Buddhism?" I said, "Yes, that is the very reason I think you



are a Buddhist," and we all laughed. This incident and similar incidents convince us that the Vedantic teachers, if they are free from prejudice and preconceived notions, can really contribute greatly to the removal of this conflict started a number of centuries ago in the West. They can act as impartial arbitrators or mediators.

#### IV

Vedanta tries to remove the conflict between science and religion by showing the real validity of religious experiences. Some psychiatrists and psychologists may think these religious experiences are nothing but self-hypnosis and hallucination. We admit there have been some pathological cases and cases of hallucination, self-hypnosis, and auto-suggestion. But they do not transform the personality. On the contrary, personality degenerates when one has hallucination or auto-suggestion. On the other hand, valid religious experience really changes the personality of a man. It makes him emotionally stable, integrated, pure, loving, forgiving. He also has a knowledge of the Reality which he never had before he had this valid religious experience. So Vedantic teachers tell us that real religious experience is also scientific, as its validity is understood by its effect in the person and his associates. In fact, such a man or woman, whether Hindu, Christian, Jew or Moslem, Buddhist or Taoist, becomes so dynamic, pure, and loving that he or she can change even abnormal and questionable personalities into sainthood.

We have seen such examples in our own life. A drunken young man came to our Monastery about fifty years ago to take his brother away. His brother had joined the Order, but the drunken younger brother was furious and extremely hostile to the idea of religion. When he came to the Monastery, one of our great Swamis whom I knew intimately met him. This man became furious and insulted the Swami in every possible way. The great spiritual personality, on the other hand, showered his love and sympathy on this man, telling him that he could take his brother away if the brother would like to go back. It was amazing for us to note that this man was so influenced by the loving care of the great Swami that he was thoroughly changed. Instead of taking his brother, he joined the Order and became one of the most important welfare workers in India. He is the man who started one of the best hospitals in Burma. We happen to know many such instances. So we can say that valid religious experiences can change not only a person himself but they can change others. Social scientists and physical scientists can try to understand the effect of valid

experiences. It is the duty of a Vedantic teacher to accept the challenge of the present time.

We also try to show that there is basic harmony of all religions, as we already mentioned. And we try to teach the techniques which were developed in India so that a Christian or a Jew or an agnostic can verify the Absolute, while remaining what he is in his religious conviction. Finally, we try to counsel the people who need emotional integration and religious development.

These basic ideas are gradually pervading and permeating American society. Many scientists of various schools and religious teachers of various religions are showing interest in the basic ideas of Vedanta as they affect the life of the individual. Vedanta does not want anyone to be otherworldly or to give up the world. Vedanta teaches how to remain in the world, perform its duties, and yet realize the Truth, without creating any conflict or tension in individual and collective life.



## 2. Moslem Missions in America

CHARLES S. BRADEN

### I

SO LONG HAVE WE in America been on the sending end of a great missionary enterprise that it comes to many as a shock when they learn that we are now ourselves the objects of a foreign missionary enterprise supported by non-Christian peoples with the avowed purpose of making converts of Americans to their faith. Most Americans have had no contact with representatives of other faiths than Christian. They may have been dimly aware that here and there in the larger cities alien temples have been built, but mostly in areas where there was a concentration of foreign people, who wished to carry on their traditional religious practices, as in the various "Chinatowns," especially on the west coast. They may have seen on trips to California an occasional exotic-appearing temple, perhaps Hindu, but they have shrugged that off as just what one might expect to find in California, which is popularly supposed to be the natural habitat of the so-called "cults." But that any concerted effort might have been undertaken by specific oriental or other religions to evangelize America has hardly entered their thinking.

Yet in these latter days this is actually happening. On a small scale, to be sure—thus far. But it is happening. Some of the alien faiths claim that they do not seek converts away from Christianity; they only want to enrich the religious life of Christian America by bringing to Americans the unique insights which their faiths have to offer. This is notably true of Hinduism. Yet the net result of their labors is the creation of little groups who do effectively withdraw from active participation in the life of the Christian churches, and become Hindus in faith and practice. Some of them even adopt Indian dress and Indian names, just as some Christians in India adopt Western dress and take Christian names.

But in the case of Islam, the proper designation of the faith of Mohammed, America faces a religion which, like Christianity, has a profound sense of mission, that will not be satisfied until all the world is

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Muslim (sometimes spelled "Moslem"). It began six centuries later than Christianity, yet today claims more than 400,000,000 followers, as over against the more than 800,000,000 claimed as Christian. The number of Muslim converts in America is today negligible. There are of course many Muslims who have migrated from Muslim lands and who remain loyal to their Prophet. But I once heard a Muslim missionary say on the occasion of the opening of a mosque in Chicago, "Our numbers today may seem very small, but sooner or later America will be Muslim." And he spoke with a quiet faith such as I have observed in Christian missionaries as they have spoken of winning the world for Christ.

It has been popularly supposed that Islam was spread chiefly by military conquest. It is undoubtedly true that Islamic political domination of an enormous area in Asia Minor, Africa, Europe and the Middle East was won by military might. It is also true that this favored conversion of many people to the faith, even when they were not usually compelled to renounce their own faith or die. Actually there was a good deal of tolerance especially of Christians and Jews as "people of the Book." They were sometimes subject to taxation from which Muslims were exempt, as well as other social pressures, to which those of not too deep a Christian faith undoubtedly succumbed and became converts. But within the Muslim-controlled areas Christian groups, chiefly of the Eastern Orthodox branch of the church, have succeeded in maintaining their separate existence right down to our own day—as the Coptic church in Egypt, the Armenian church in Armenia, the Syrian churches in the Near East, while there have been continuing Christian and Jewish communities in Palestine.

But quite outside of the area of political dominance Islam has spread and continues to spread. There was no conquest of China, or of Indonesia, yet Chinese Muslims claim as many as 50,000,000 followers, and over 70 per cent of the Indonesians are said to be Muslims. Nor has there been any political domination of Africa south of the Sahara, yet it is being said that for every convert to Christianity in that part of the world there are ten turning to Islam. A study made fifty years ago by a famous scholar, Sir Thomas Arnold, declares:

The spread of this faith over so vast a portion of the globe is due to various causes, social, political, and religious, but among these, one of the most powerful factors at work in the production of this stupendous result, has been the unremitting labours of Muslim missionaries, who, with the prophet himself as their great ensample, have spent themselves for the conversion of unbelievers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Arnold, T., *The Preaching of Islam*, London: Constable and Co., 2nd edition, 1913, p. 3.

He regarded the duty of missionary work as no mere afterthought in the history of Islam, but one that was enjoined on believers from the very beginning, as he proved by citing numerous sayings of Mohammed from the Quran.

But missionary work has been in general rather different in Islam than in Christianity. For the greater part it has not been the work of professionals, persons commissioned and sent out as missionaries, but that of devout laymen, merchants, travelers, government officials, etc., who have carried their faith with them as they have gone to live in other lands and created new centers of Islamic worship and belief to which the surrounding people have been attracted. Since in Islam there exists no real priesthood or theory of the separateness of the religious teacher from the regular body of believers, there seems to be a feeling of greater responsibility on the part of the laymen to propagate the faith rather than to rely upon the efforts of the professional clergyman or teacher. It is said sometimes that every Muslim is a missionary, just as it is sometimes said that every Christian ought to be a missionary. While this may be and probably is an exaggeration, it is certainly true that much of the spread of Islam is due to the work of devout, nonprofessional, lay men and women, whose missionary outreach is simply the result of their own sense of responsibility to bring others into the brotherhood.

Beyond the work of individuals in Islam there has been some active propaganda of a missionary sort by certain Muslim orders resembling those within Christianity. But actual missionary work by societies constituted for this specific purpose is a late development within Islam, and largely as a result of the enormous missionary effort put forth within Christianity during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Arnold, writing early in the twentieth century, was able to name a few small societies organized chiefly in India to combat the extraordinary activity of the Arya Samaj, a militant Hindu reformed society which sought to reconvert Muslims and Christians who had forsaken Hinduism for one or the other of these faiths. Arnold devotes only two pages to this sort of missionary effort, out of nearly four hundred and fifty pages in which he is really writing of the missionary outreach of Islam.

But the most active present Islamic missionary group he did not even mention, for it had come into existence only a few years, less than a decade, before the first edition of his book appeared. Since it is this group, the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, which is quite the most active in its missionary activity in America, it is of this that I shall chiefly write in this

article, though there are other Islamic or semi-Islamic groups which have made or are making some impact in the American scene.<sup>2</sup>

## II

The Ahmadiyya Movement, it should be said, is regarded by orthodox Muslims as heretical. It has, indeed, been bitterly persecuted at times both in India where it originated and in other Muslim areas into which it has sent its missionaries. But it is Islam in every basic belief and practice. Its one distinctive feature is that it believes that in the latter half of the nineteenth century there appeared in India The Promised Messiah, one Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, founder of the Movement, "whom God raised for the reformation of the present age." The movement is obviously eclectic, for he claimed to be the Messiah for the Christians, the Madhi for the Muslims, Krishna or the *Neha Kalank Avatar* for the Hindus, and *Mesio Darbahmi* for the Zoroastrians. In short, he was "the Promised Prophet of every nation and was appointed to collect all mankind under the banner of one faith. In him were centered the hopes and expectations of all nations; he is the Dome of Peace under which every nation may worship its Maker; he is the opening through which all nations may obtain a vision of their Lord; and he is the center at which meet all the radii of the circle. . . . It is ordained therefore, that all the world shall find peace and rest only through him."<sup>3</sup>

The movement founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in 1889 had its center in Qadian until the intercommunal rioting on the occasion of the partition of India and the formation of Pakistan brought about its destruction. It is now at Rabwah about ninety kilometers north of Lahore, a site chosen by the second successor of the Promised Messiah, one of his sons, who is the present head of the Movement. He told me the story of it over a delicious luncheon at which I was his guest in Rabwah in 1952. It was the result of revelation. After the destruction of Qadian when it became apparent that it was no longer suitable as the headquarters, he had a dream or vision in which he saw on a hill overlooking a valley through which flowed a large river, an ancient hut. In front of it there were certain figures. It came to him that this was a sign as to where the new center should be located. One day, months later, he was driving in the area to the north of Lahore. It was a dusty treeless valley, almost uninhabited, but near a

<sup>2</sup> See my article, "Islam in America," which is to appear in a forthcoming issue of *The International Review of Missions*.

<sup>3</sup> Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad, *Ahmadiyyat or The True Islam*, Washington: The American Fazl Mosque, 3rd edition, 1951, pp. 10-11.

river which had cut its way deep in the level plain. No more unlikely spot could have been seen. Suddenly on the hill he was approaching he saw an ancient hut before which were grouped three figures exactly as in his vision. "This is the place," he cried.

He immediately proceeded to buy up the land and to subdivide it. First he built a mosque. When I was there less than four years later there was a city of some ten thousand people, a veritable hive of busy building activity, though there was yet much to be done. The pumps to bring up water from the river were not yet installed. Electricity had just been introduced. The streets were dusty for lack of sufficient irrigation water, but there was a spirit of eagerness among the people as they built solidly what was to be the holy city of their sect, the headquarters of a movement which would send its people out to the ends of the earth carrying the faith of the Prophet, as interpreted to them by the living voice of the Successor to the Promised Messiah, through whom revelation continues to come from Allah to his people.

It is this Movement which has become the most aggressive missionary arm of Islam. They have taken over almost bodily the methods and techniques of the Christian missionary enterprise and are endeavoring thus to make Islam known to the world. It is they who have missions scattered all over the world, and of course in America. A little book entitled *Our Foreign Missions* has just been sent to me by the head of the mission in America from Washington, D. C. It states in very clear language in the introduction the motives and aims of the missionary activity of the movement, more clearly than anything I had previously seen.

The writer begins by saying that missionary activity in Islam had practically died out long before the coming of the Promised Messiah. The aggressive onslaught of Christians on Islam had reached a peak. It took the form of a campaign of misrepresentation and vilification from pulpit and press, concentrated particularly at the point of proving that Islam was the negation of all civilization and progress, and of painting in ghastly colors the Islamic conception of *jihad* or the Holy War and the use of the sword as a means of conversion. The powerful assault of Christian missionaries he says shook the Muslim world as a tornado, "so that broken and defeated Muslims shrank within themselves with terror and began to feel that the storm would wash away all trace of Islam from the face of the earth."

It was exactly at this point, when the Muslim mind was feeling defeated and dejected, and they were raising their eyes to heaven praying that God

would come to their aid, that God raised up the Promised Messiah who would on the one hand revivify Islam and on the other would "shatter the Cross to pieces . . ." So successfully was the task of revivifying Islam carried out, says the writer of the booklet,

that Christian plans to wipe out Islam were completely obliterated from the world map of future possibilities. In fact he completely turned the tables upon the Christian peoples in this respect until now we find that the Christian clergy . . . are seriously concerned because they find that Ahmad's interpretation of Islam is actually making successful inroads upon Europe and the Americas as well.<sup>4</sup>

The task of shattering the Cross to pieces demanded that, just as Christian missionaries had been penetrating to the nooks and corners of earth, Ahmadi missionaries should roll the tide back and carry the fight into the homelands of the Christians themselves. . . . The wind is now beginning to blow from East to West. . . . Already we are beginning to find that the selfsame people who were not prepared to listen to the merest mention of Islam, now are coming forward to bear witness that the work of breaking the Cross to pieces is already well in hand, and that the day does not seem distant when only one religion would prevail over all the world, the religion brought by Mohammad.<sup>5</sup>

### III

The missionary work of the Ahmadiyya Movement in America was begun in 1921 in Chicago, and national headquarters were maintained there until 1950 when they were removed to Washington, D. C. During most of this period a quarterly magazine has been published, called the *Muslim Sunrise*, besides pamphlets and a few books. It is from an examination of these and personal acquaintance with successive heads of the mission that I attempt to set forth here what seem to be the major points of emphasis which the movement makes in its approach to the people of America.

First, let it be noted that they make a good deal of the fact that Islam is not something wholly alien to Christianity. On the contrary it makes a very definite attempt to link Islam to the Judeo-Christian tradition. Muslims are quite as much the children of Abraham, and therefore heirs to the promises of God to Abraham, as are the Jews, for they descend from Abraham just as much as the Jews do. Indeed they are the descendants of his first-born son Ishmael, and primogeniture is an important matter among Near-Eastern peoples. Furthermore the Prophet Mohammed is definitely foretold in Scripture, indeed both in the Old and New Testaments.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Our Foreign Missions*, p. iv.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. v, vi, passim.

<sup>6</sup> See Bengalee, M. R., *Life of Muhammad*, Chicago: The Moslem Sunrise Press, 1941, chapter 7, Muhammad in the Bible.



Second, they make much of Jesus, who appears very often in the Quran. Speaking and writing among people of dominantly Christian background they pay high tribute to Jesus, though not of course to Jesus as conceived in orthodox theological circles. It is Jesus the prophet they admire and honor.

But since it is a fundamental point of emphasis among them that the oneness of God admits of attributing divinity to none other, they are at frequent pains to attack the notion of Jesus' divinity. To do this they feel obliged to attack particularly the notion of his death and resurrection. But what of the New Testament narratives? Anything that serves to discredit these or to throw any doubt upon their literal truth is likely to be used. Although insisting that the Christian Scriptures prophesy the coming of their prophet, they consistently contrast these with the Quran, holding that while the Quran is absolute revelation, not subject to human error, the Bible is an extremely human document, full of errors. They make frequent use of the statements of modern scholars from the Christian and Jewish faiths which set forth the apparent contradictions or inconsistencies due to such things as the plural authorship of some of the books of the Bible. The title of one book, *The Bible Is Human*, was made the basis of an article in one of the magazines of the movement, showing just how human they think it to be.

Since there is such a human element in the Bible it cannot be trusted as true when such claims are made concerning Jesus as his virgin birth, some of his miracles, and particularly his resurrection. This on the negative side. Positively they assert and insist that they have proof that Jesus after his crucifixion did not die, as reported in the Gospels, but was taken alive from the tomb, having only swooned, and escaped to India where he spent many years of ministry, finally dying and being buried in Srinagar, in Kashmir. There is to be found the Tomb of Isa, none other than Jesus, and multitudes of Muslim pilgrims each year come to pay honor to him. The proof is, to say the least, an interesting one if not convincing. One proof is that Jesus said in Mt. 15:24, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But who are the lost sheep of the house of Israel? None other than the people of Afghanistan and of Kashmir. So Jesus went to them and ended his ministry among them. This has been written over and over again, published in their magazines and separately in pamphlet form. It is available at the Washington headquarters of the Movement at 2141 Leroy Place, N.W., Washington 8, D. C., under the title, *The Tomb of Jesus*.

Where precisely the Promised Messiah got the idea to begin with,

I have no way of knowing. I have seen references to the *The Unknown Life of Jesus*, by Baron Notovich, cited by Muslims as supporting the idea, although according to this account Jesus visited India in the early years of his career, before his baptism and ministry for which he apparently returned to his own country. Also reference has been made in its support to *The Mystical Life of Jesus*, by H. Spencer Lewis, the Rosicrucian leader. It is firmly held by the Ahmadiyyas and is cited by them frequently in support of their claim that Jesus was only human.

#### IV

But what values do they assign to Islam as they attempt to win American converts? What may Islam be expected to do for its followers that Christianity is not already doing? I recall a single printed sheet which was given to me many years ago which was apparently used as a tract to interest people. I have found these same ideas so often repeated in their publications and in the lectures I have heard them give, that I think they may be fairly said to be their major points of emphasis, in addition of course to the theological doctrines which are common to all Moslems. Islam, they say, stands for peace, for racial brotherhood, for temperance, and for the uplift of women. Let me elaborate briefly on these.

1. Peace! The very word Islam, the name of the religion itself means just that, *peace*, the peace that comes, first of all, to the individual from a complete surrender of the will to God, Allah. Peace also in the family life, peace in the daily round of business or professional life, but also peace between nations and peoples. I have heard a Muslim say: "The world will never know peace until it embraces Islam." But of course I have heard a Buddhist say that it must become Buddhist, and a Christian that it must become Christian. This claim sounds strange to those who have uniformly associated Islam with war and conquest, which it must be truly said has been the way Islam was generally presented to the Western world by its writers. Muslims say that this is not so, and that they have been maligned. Until there has been a considerably more widespread reading of books by Muslim writers who can present plausibly a different picture, the warlike character of Islam will probably continue to be the idea most Westerners have. The doctrine of the Holy War as one of the pillars of Islam requires not a little explaining to peoples of the West. This the Ahmadiyyas are trying to do. Actually some of their representatives, while not pacifists, insist that only defensive war is ever permissible. The ambiguity of the meaning of defensive war of course leaves a great deal of room for the



continuance of war. As I have heard their ideas expounded they sounded not so different from the Roman Catholic doctrine that only the *just* war is permissible.

2. Most appealing of all is the claim of racial brotherhood, especially to those of our American people who labor under the disability of being colored. When the Muslims affirm as they do constantly that there is no color bar in Islam, they get the attention particularly of Negroes. And it must be said that the greater number of converts to Islam have been from among Negroes. A friend was passing through Forty-third Street on the South Side of Chicago one Sunday night. At a corner he saw a crowd around a man on a soap box listening intently. He was obviously preaching. Drawing near, my friend saw that it was a Muslim missionary, and he was saying to his 100 per cent Negro listeners, "There is no color bar in Islam. In the brotherhood there is no distinction of race or class."

Is there one in Christianity? Of course not, if one goes to his New Testament. But what if he goes to a Christian church? It was this precisely that most of these people had done, and seen men divided on the basis of something about which they could do nothing, color. In the whole of the United States there are comparatively but a handful of Christian churches that are integrated as to race. Nor is the church in the vanguard of the movement to end segregation on a racial basis. It has been the world of sport, the armed services, the courts that have taken the lead in ending discrimination based upon race. To be sure there have been outstanding leaders within the church who have been active in seeking integration. Many have spoken out courageously, even in the deep South at the risk of loss of position and even of violence; but the fact remains that, as was said recently, eleven o'clock on Sunday morning is the most segregated hour of the week. No wonder it appears to many colored people that there is a color bar within Christianity, and they are greatly attracted when they hear of a faith which claims that no such bar exists.

Effectively, has Islam eliminated the color bar? The answer must, I think, be that whether or not it has done so completely, there can be no question that their record in this regard is better than the Christian record. It has been remarked that this may be due not so much to Muslim teaching as to the fact that Islam has spread most notably among those peoples who do not have the deep racial feelings of the north Europeans, and were not accustomed to discriminating among people on a color basis before Islam came to them. Would Islam, if it got a foothold in Europe or America, where the deeper racial prejudices seem most to flourish, be any better

than the Christians? The answer cannot be certainly known. I recall having called to the attention of a Muslim missionary at one time the fact that he preferred to meet with a group of his white members in his downtown office, rather than at the mosque, where there were generally present more black folk than white, and which was situated in a segregated colored area. His reply was: "That is because of the Christian background of these white people." Presumably he would have to educate them out of their prejudices before they could be successfully integrated into the Muslim group. I have never been quite sure who came off better in that exchange. What does the Christian reader think?

3. A third emphasis is temperance. Islam has from the beginning been rigorously opposed to the use of intoxicants. That does not mean that no Muslims ever drink. Bootlegging is not solely a practice of so-called Christian peoples. It is not unknown in Islam. But by and large, again, it must be said that their record in this regard is better than that of Christianity. The Muslim world was thrilled when the United States passed the eighteenth amendment outlawing liquor. The famous "Pussyfoot" Johnson, anti-liquor leader, shortly after the successful passage of the amendment went on a trip around the world. In Egypt he is said to have been met by a delegation of important Muslims with the statement, "Mr. Johnson, we are so happy that at last the United States have become Muslim." (We have lapsed from the faith since then in a big way!)

Much emphasis is laid upon this matter in their preaching and their literature. A recent magazine carried the statistics of liquor consumption in the United States for the year past. Often the evils of the traffic in liquor are proclaimed, and they believe that only as America becomes Muslim will it succeed in its fight against the consumption of intoxicating beverages.

4. The fourth emphasis will sound strange to Americans who have heard of the low estate of women in Moslem lands, and who have uniformly looked with pity upon them. What could Islam have to say to Americans about the uplift of women? It was my custom for many years as a teacher of the History of Religions to invite living representatives of the various faiths to speak to my classes and permit my students to ask questions. It was always at this point that my Muslim guests had their worst time, especially at the hands of women members of the class. What about *pardah*, the seclusion of women? What about polygamy? And what about Mohammed himself who was married to so many women?

There is not room here to detail the answers he attempted to give. He was clearly on the defensive. He could assert and with truth that the

general picture of the place of woman in Islam has been misstated and misinterpreted. He could show that Mohammed actually lifted the level of women very much indeed in the Arabia of the seventh century, and he could point out properly that he put women on an economic plane in respect to men that she does not yet enjoy in some so-called Christian countries, greater in some respects than exists in some of the states of the United States. He could and did raise the question as to whether all the gain of freedom and equality with men which women enjoy in America is an unmixed good, but his female listeners were little impressed with what he had to say. Rather oddly, the Ahmadiyya group which seems quite heterodox to orthodox Muslims seems to be less liberal in this area than many of the orthodox Muslims are. The practice of *purdah* which has been sloughed off in many Muslim communities is practiced in Rabwah, the headquarters in Pakistan, and the wives of Ahmadiyya missionaries even in America have continued to do so, at least some of them.

Polygamy is definitely on the decline throughout the Muslim world, but its practice is theoretically justified, under certain conditions, among the Ahmadiyyas. The present head of the Movement, I was told, has the four wives permissible under Muslim law. Only when a husband can give absolutely equal treatment to his several wives is plural marriage permitted, they teach. The difficulties of doing this are a profound limitation on its general practice. How can a man love equally four women at one and the same time?

As a matter of fact plural marriage, since it is forbidden in America, becomes an academic question for Muslims who desire to continue to live in America, so it is rarely discussed except when the defense of the faith or of the Prophet demands it.

Possibly one other aspect of their teaching should be mentioned, namely the principle of *zakat*, for it affords the basis of a claim by very eminent Muslims that properly practiced it successfully solves the problem of the distribution of wealth among the people of the world. It is one aspect of the total economic and social teaching of Islam which it is claimed is superior to any other system, either socialism, communism or capitalism, and makes of it a rival of these systems. There is not space here to develop the idea fully. The most eminent exponent of this idea is a distinguished Ahmadiyya Muslim, formerly foreign minister of Pakistan, head of the Pakistan delegation to the United Nations, and presently one of the judges of the International Court at The Hague. A typical statement of this point of view appears in the *Muslim Sunrise* in discussing Pakistan:

In Pakistan there is no place for either Communism or Capitalism, firstly, because the Islamic doctrine of equality and brotherhood is, on the one hand, superior both in theory and in its practical consequences, to the equality preached by Communism, and on the other, it cures the inequality produced by Capitalism. Secondly, while recognizing the right of individual ownership, Islam sets up an effective machinery for a fair and equitable distribution of wealth. Islam is the golden mean between two extremes, and is bound to triumph over both.<sup>7</sup>

## V

What success has the mission in America had? For a detailed study of this see my article in the *International Review of Missions* referred to above. In summary it is enough to say here that there are Ahmadiyya Muslim communities in more than a dozen of the larger cities of America. Six missionaries are actively at work. There were but two in 1948. In several of the cities mosques exist in buildings which have been rented or purchased and adapted to serve as places of worship or built as mosques. And others are being planned. Some forty different titles of books or pamphlets are available at the Washington headquarters. The membership is not large and the missionaries tell me that they have all the same difficulties that missionaries anywhere have in building a solid loyal organization that will represent well the essential spirit of the faith. Finances are a real problem, since the supporting base in India is small and of a lower standard of living than America. The result is that they are obliged to find local self-support to a large degree, and this is difficult. But the work goes on, as deeply consecrated Muslim men and women, sometimes at great personal sacrifice, somehow manage to maintain themselves.

There is besides this direct missionary activity of Islam, an indirect approach of the Muslim world to America best typified in the new and very beautiful mosque and Moslem Cultural Center in Washington, D. C., supported by the various embassies of Muslim countries as well as by private Muslim philanthropy. Here the effort is not direct conversion, but to present the finest features of Islamic culture, its art, literature, scholarship, all of which are of course closely bound up with its religion, that of the Prophet. The net result of it is of course to win for Islam a new respect in the West and to offset to some degree the adverse judgment of the West on it, based, as Muslims think, on misinformation and prejudiced writing on the part of the writers of Christendom. This constitutes the finest kind of indirect missionary work, and is precisely the sort of thing Christian missionaries have done at times, especially in the earlier years of their

<sup>7</sup> Vol. 22, p. 15.

entrance into countries where there was little popular acceptance of the direct approach.

What we are seeing today in America is the clearest kind of evidence that long quiescent religions are coming awake, that they are beginning to defend themselves against the world Christian mission in their own lands, and even to take the offensive and carry the battle to the very lands whence the missionaries of Christ have come. The day is definitely past when it could be quietly assumed that it is only a matter of time until "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ." What difference if any should that fact make in the strategy of the Christian world mission? For Christians it may well be a time of "agonizing reappraisal."

I do not know what others may think concerning this attempted invasion of our so-called Christian countries. As for myself, I welcome it. Some of the missionaries of Islam and other faiths are warm personal friends of mine. A genuine Christianity, if it be true, has nothing to fear from such activity. If these people have something they can teach us concerning how to achieve peace, either inward or between nations; about a true brotherhood that knows no color bar; about the values of true temperance; even about the way we treat our women, I am all for them. As a matter of fact, their very presence among us may force us to see more clearly our own faith and its significance for the whole of life, and spur us to a deeper commitment to it. I am old fashioned enough to believe that in the democratic give-and-take between religious faiths there may emerge some deeper insight and understanding of the truth and its application to the life of our world and our times.

### 3. *The Significance and Value of Zen to Me*

STEWART W. HOLMES

IN SPEAKING of the significance and value of Zen to me, I speak as a Christian who is reorienting his life according to his growing understanding of Zen. I do not speak as an authority on Zen, but my Buddhist friends have approved my statements.

What is Zen? More accurately, what at this moment do I mean by "Zen"? Many things. First, a way of living: through Zen one may experience the enlightenment that the Buddha Shakyamuni achieved 2,500 years ago. Thus one gains the freedom to live at the height of one's powers. Zen, as the content of this experience, cannot be described in words.

Historically: Zen is a Buddhist sect which took shape in sixth-century China as Buddhist missionaries from India came in contact with Taoists. It became a very influential part of the flowering of Chinese culture in the T'ang and Sung Dynasties (A.D. 618-1280). During the latter part of this period Zen masters went to Japan. Zen thereupon became one of the primary factors in Japanese life, especially in the areas where religion and the life of the people interact. Painting, landscaping, architecture, sculpture, drama, poetry, flower-arranging, judo, sword-play, archery, stick-play—all were considerably shaped by Zen. All have their esoteric aspects that are adroitly calculated to assist in the achieving of enlightenment.

Zen is today the second most popular sect of Buddhism in Japan. In America it is, I suppose, currently the most talked-about non-Christian religion.

Doctrinally: Zen calls everything in the cosmos "Buddha-nature." Each human being, consequently, is thought of as essentially Buddha. The fact that we do not behave like Buddhas is explained this way: As we grow up, we become parts of a verbalistic culture and, accepting this culture uncritically, we become subject to the tyranny of conventions. These learned ways of perceiving, evaluating, and using symbols overlie our primal, organismal wisdom. In order that our native Buddhahood may awaken and "take over," we must become masters, not slaves, of conven-

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tional symbol-systems and even ways of perceiving: of *Gestalten*, ideas, ideals, dogmas, beliefs. We must become aware that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

This does not mean that we must throw out the baby with the bath, that we must discard and trample under foot all the conventions, all the folk-wisdom, all the "decencies." It means that we must reorient ourselves to these aspects of our life so that we use them rather than are used by them. In this revaluing of values, Zen disciples are trained to see in all scriptures, all utterances by *anyone*, the verbalizings of some human being, with the limitations consequent on such an origin. Since each person functions as a unique expression of the Buddha-nature, only he can teach himself to use his unique vision. Thus the Buddhist scriptures are sometimes referred to by Zen masters as "dirtwipers," and the saying goes, "If you meet the Buddha, kill him."

In view of this, I think of Zen as a "meta-religion," in that it enables one to approach any religion or any atheist or humanist faith in such a way that one is led to penetrate its forms to its essence. Just as a study of comparative linguistics may enable us to see the powers and limitations of the world-view expressed by each of the various languages; just as a study of cultural anthropology may do the same for us as regards cultures; just as the study of psychiatry may do the same for us as regards individual personality structures; so may a training in Zen do this for us as regards religious and personal metaphysics. By its emphasis on living rather than on talk about living, Zen cuts through distress-causing growths of word- and symbol-based forms as a surgeon's scalpel excises cancer tissue. Forms are peeled away, revealing essence.

This statement leads conveniently into a discussion of the significance of Zen for me.

# I

First, it is enabling me to supply metaphysical depth to the most profound notion of the twentieth century—the relativity of the known to the knower. Research into the ways we perceive is demonstrating ever more decisively the validity of Korzybski's organization of the epistemological process. Briefly stated, his formulation runs this way: We talk *only* about our impressions, which are based on our neurosensory reactions to sensory stimuli; we never talk directly about the sources of sensory stimuli. Each one of us creates the "reality" on which he bases his behavior. If he hears a priest or reads some scriptures, he knows only *his* interpretation of these words, not the priest's or scripture-writer's. All each of us

knows is what he knows. Only Buddhism, I believe, is based on this epistemological rock. Zen applies this notion rigorously.

The second significance flows out of the first: Zen seems quite compatible with the facts and orientations of twentieth-century Western science. Zen, like science, considers the cosmos in a unitary way. It does not speak of God *and* the world, but only of Buddha-nature. It does not have two sources of causation, God *and* nature. It does not separate the moral and ideal from what may be called "the physical." It does not recognize the existence (outside of the human mind) of such dualistic absolutes as good and evil, beautiful and ugly, God as absolute right and the Devil as absolute wrong. It does not talk about man as a distinct entity, with an individual immortal soul, over against the rest of nature. All of this accords with my understanding of a basic orientation of the physical and social sciences.

Third: a human being is considered as part of a transactional process that includes his environment, a process unique at each moment. The notion that a person is a discrete being, who remains the same day after day and has full responsibility for all his actions, who can be improved by just being talked to, who is morally obliged to force himself to live according to the tenets of his religious or cultural imperatives—such a notion seems to me foreign to Zen and to science. Rather, man is thought of as part of nature, in continual transaction with nature as chemicals flow in and out of him, as sensory stimuli (including words) are constantly abstracted into and projected out of him, changing as he adjusts to each change in his microclimate, part of a chain of processes in which he plays a transforming role. Neither a feudal lord nor a serf, but part of a collaboration; neither a criminal nor a saint, but a tough and delicate organism continually adjusting in new ways to a constantly changing milieu.

The fourth significance is closely related to this point of view: Zen enables one to shift from an inner climate of struggle to live up to ideals imposed by outside and unscientific sources (in order to save one's immortal soul) to a climate of athletically coping with ever-new situations in the light of one's best information in order to bring about the most harmonious joint economy in the total situation. The vain, millennia-old struggle of the few to make the many love their neighbor is quietly bypassed when an understanding is gained that one's neighbor is part of the joint economy that includes oneself. If my neighbor and I exist as parts of a whole, in which the better off he is, the better off I am, then I am going to do the best I can for him, since I thus improve the whole situation—which



includes me. No one has to urge me to love him in order to make me give him a helping hand.

The fifth significance that I isolate for examination I have touched on in the description of Zen. The focus of importance shifts from words to things; from generalizations—usually sweeping and cocksure—to observations of what's going on; from man-made complications to the joys which the wisdom of the "body" provides us; from dogma to intuition; from talk about life to life.

I do not mean that Zen leads one to believe that generalizations and so on should be abolished. This would not accord with the spirit of Zen, which is *inclusive*, not *exclusive*, of phenomena, including words. *But in Zen generalizations are not made in order that truths be asserted but rather that a fellow human being may be helped to greater awareness.* A change of focus is induced in which one relaxes from the brow-furrowing struggle to know who has the right words, which "facts" are correct, which dogmas are *really* true, which picture is *really* the most beautiful, which idea is *really* best, which reality is *really* real. No matter how impressive the robes of the speaker, his words will be given value as they fit into the listener's way of life.

This again accords with the spirit of modern science, in which every hypothesis and theory is subject as soon as stated to social and operational validation. Furthermore, in science one not only observes a continual testing of theories, but also a continual friendly co-operation and communication which knows no boundaries. In religion one seldom observes a testing of theories according to an agreed standard of testing. Certainly we behold a fragmented and frequently inimical group of religions and of sects of each religion. Symbol-using in the operational, linguistically sophisticated mode—the mode of Zen and of science—unites; in the dogmatic, absolutistic, linguistically naive mode—the mode of most religionists—it divides.

In general, the significance Zen has for me today may be stated thus: It is helping me to become a part of the twentieth century all over, not just from my neck up. Intellectual understandings are being transformed into living experiences that constitute the meaning of my life.

## II

What value has Zen for me as a Christian? Four values stand out in my mind: (1) dualisms have been abolished; (2) dogmas have been reduced to a nonobtrusive state of minor importance; (3) the Christian

story has acquired a living, contemporary content; (4) the practice of religion has become an art.

The first dualism which has gone is the notion of a personal God and I. As this dualism vanished, there also vanished anxiety over this superman's attitude toward me; the necessity for me to implore him for such gifts as health, peace of mind, forgiveness of sins, and so on; and the feeling of guilt that I was not living up to his standards. I also lost my bewilderment over the uncertain efficacy of this father-image when I observed his area of power dwindle over the centuries as human beings learned to handle more and more of their problems successfully. Occam's razor became operative in all realms of my thinking, rather than in all but one.

The problem of good and evil—insoluble for me within the context of the personal God who is Absolute Good—disappeared. In Zen, events occur; human beings put labels on them. The question "Is this really good or really evil?" being nonsense, the question "Is God absolutely good?" has no meaning either. And the old anxiety, still clearly voiced by certain clerics, as to whether I am on God's side or the Devil's disappeared.

Also I ceased to think in the vocabulary of a feudal monarchy. (See the *Book of Common Prayer*, *passim*.) I was no longer the serf prostrate before his feudal lord, but a citizen in a democracy, part of the total process, of equal dignity with all, from President to priest. NOT God and I, separate entities, but an eternal Whole, of which I am a part.

The Christian dogmas have followed these dualisms into the realm of historical curiosities. The truth of the events and propositions stated in the Bible and in ecumenical councils has ceased to concern me. What God is; what Jesus was—or Christ is; the nature of faith, heaven, hell, foreknowledge absolute; which miracles occurred and how; the personal relations between the members of the Holy Trinity; what happened to Jesus' body between Friday and Sunday; whether one is truly baptized unless wholly immersed; whether infant baptism is truly effective; whether a bishop is really a bishop if he is outside the line (or one of the lines) of apostolic succession; which sins are venial and which are mortal; how fast one can get through purgatory, etc., etc., etc.—such concerns have become un concerns.

Getting rid of this static clears the "airwaves" for my reception of Jesus' messages. Jesus is reported as saying, "The rain falls on the just and the unjust alike." That makes sense to me, in a unitary world. He

is reported again as saying, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." I interpret that in my decoder as meaning "Propositions and other culture forms exist to help men to enlightenment, not to enable the few to exert tyranny over the many." I'll "buy" that, whatever claims of status are made for the sayer of these words, for this meaning accords with my beliefs about the nature of symbols and symbolmakers. He reportedly said another time, "Consider the lilies of the field . . ." The understanding I get out of this passage lines up with the Zen notion of trusting one's Buddha-nature and going along with the Tao, the "Way Life Goes."

Third, through Zen I have learned to see the Christian stories as living myths. (By "myth" I mean a story about "how the world wags"—a story whose truth lies in the living meaning it has for the person who hears or reads it.) Here, I have learned to say, are some words. What meaning-content can I give them which will best help me toward enlightenment? Since Zen has taught me how to live on nonverbal levels—the levels on which religions come into being—I am experiencing meanings which give life to the myths in the eternal NOW.

The Virgin Birth, the incarnation of God in Jesus through the operation of the Holy Spirit, means for me that I—Everyman—am part of God. Holy Communion becomes a "working" symbol of this notion. As I eat the elements, I become aware that that part of God outside my skin is functionally one with that part of God inside my skin. The Logos and the flesh are one. To use a different symbolism: I become aware that every moment as I abstract from my environment and structure the messages of my neurosensory system, the environment and I are united in a unique transactional whole. This is true also of the digestive aspect of the organism, of course, as Texas carrots and Florida grapefruit and Kansas corn become transmuted into the nerves and muscles, glands and bones that produce the words I am writing—and into the nerves and muscles, glands and bones that are interpreting them. All is Buddha-nature, says Zen.

(The interaction of the members of the Trinity means this to me now. God the Father means the world of nature, not including man. God the Son means man. God the Holy Spirit means man's world of abstractions, symbolic forms, generalizations. These three elements are parts of one, whole, unitary cosmos in which all things work together in the Tao, the Eternal Process. The gentle rains and the devouring flood, all kinds of men, from the most angelic to the most fiendish, and all kinds

of ideals and ideas—all are parts of an invisible Whole. I think of them all as aspects of God, of the Cosmos, of Buddha-nature.)

In thinking of the crucifixion one may momentarily recall for his benefit the notion that the world of forms—the world of categories and concepts, right and wrong, up and down, long and short—must “die” before the new insight can awaken. This death seems repugnant to the organism which thinks its very life depends on the maintenance of this wonderful system of “truths,” of “correct views,” of what it has long mistaken as the stuff of life itself. How sad are the friends of the crucified one—on Friday. And how happy after the resurrection and epiphany!

For without the crucifixion there can be no resurrection. What semantic content can we read into the myth of the resurrection? Why, simply that once we have thoroughly made real to ourselves the fictional nature of the world of forms, of words and other symbols, we awaken to a new life in which we can use forms—as Jesus did on the way to Emmaus—or discard them—as he did after supper that night—and live as we are potentially capable of doing. Once we have understood that the notion of ourselves as discrete beings with independent existence has simply been created in our own heads, death is reclassified and seen as quite unimportant as regards the continuity of the Whole—of which we are part. In Zen, this experience is called *satori*.

How do we arrive at this state of slavery to forms, to man-made fictions, making necessary this process of crucifixion and resurrection? The myth of the Fall demonstrates what happens. We as little children, as Adam and Eve, rejoice in our primal state, happy and innocent as the other animals. Then, as time goes on, we eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. That is to say, we learn the language and adopt the conventions and dualisms of the culture into which we are born. This knowledge “curses us,” drives us out of Eden—out of the state where the spontaneity of our living was not smothered by the fictional forms. After the resurrection we do not go back to Eden—for we cannot become as babies; we cannot unlearn our language. We go to heaven or Nirvana, a semantic state in which the citizens are living unshackled by belief in cultural fictions. Zen recalls us to this spontaneous living, to our native Buddhahood.

Fourth, through Zen I have added a new dimension to my religious life. Making an art of achieving certain experiences has brought a regimen of discipline, concentration, and patient practice into my daily life. I feel that I am swimming up the river of my religious tradition to its source.

In summary: Through what I may call a self-training in Zen I am learning again to live directly and spontaneously. (Jesus: "Except ye become as a little child, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.") This progressive emancipation from the tyranny of fictions (both perceptual and symbolic) is freeing me of the conflicts based on dualisms. These dualisms are part of our culture, part, for me, of the traditional interpretations of Christianity. I have tried to show how through Zen I am experiencing a liberation from my enslavement to dualisms and dogmas and an enriching of the myths. These myths seem meaningful to me as I live in eternity this day—meaningful because they are consistent with my present world view. (This world view is based on my current knowledge of cultural anthropology, general semantics, and the philosophy and "facts" of other branches of science as this knowledge has been processed in my organism.)

Looking behind the dualisms and dogmas—and all the other culture-derived symbols and perceptual constructs—is helping me to live each moment more creatively. I can process my input—input from words of and about Jesus and the Buddha, input from some problem or from a picture or landscape—relatively free from concerns not pertinent to the structuring and living of each event.

### III

Now that I have written this *confessio amantis Zenis*, I wonder what these words will mean to each reader. I know only that they will have different meanings for each person—and all different from mine. Zen transcends all words, all forms. As Korzybski used to say, "Whatever you say it is is simply what *you say* it is." Or as Hsiang-yen said:

At one stroke I forgot all my knowledge!  
There's no use for artificial discipline,  
For, move as I will, I manifest the ancient Way.

I find it impossible to communicate in words, especially written words, the difference in my daily life before I began Zen training and today. How does one feel when he gets out of jail after a long sentence? How does one feel when he is informed that someone has just banked a million dollars in his name? How does one feel each year on that day when he first smells spring? The Romans had a word for it—*ineffabilis*. What value does Zen have for me? On this most personal and profound level, I cannot say.

Lest some readers think that the "open sesame" for this opening of the gate is simply to say with the beatniks, "To hell with everything and everybody," may I add this: To achieve my present degree of liberating awareness of the relativity of the known to the knower has required of me long training in understanding the functioning of perceptions and symbols, together with frequent experiencing of mental states which exclude specific forms, feelings, and symbols. I am not finding this easy. Yet how exhilarating!

This exhilaration does not arise from any Dharma-bum inconoclasm. Mahayana Buddhism (of which Zen is a sect) inculcates an awareness which brings a profound respect for all forms of life. The ordered beauty of Zen landscapes and temples, of the tea ceremony and of flower-arranging, give eloquent and unmistakable evidence of the respect the Zenist gives to the forms of life. After all, these forms are part of Buddha-nature, forms which the Buddha-nature in the architect and the tea master has created. These forms are one with the true appreciator. *But* the appreciator is not subject to the forms.

Perhaps I can best illustrate the power of Zen to cut through symbolic forms and deliver us from their tyranny by copying some words of a Zen master, Dr. Hisamatsu. I talked and sat with him several times in the spring of 1958 in Cambridge. On his way back to Japan he stopped at Bodhgaya, where the Buddha Shakyamuni experienced his enlightenment. There, beside the descendant of the tree under which the Buddha sat in meditation, Dr. Hisamatsu sat in meditation. On the back of a picture which a friend took of him in that state he wrote me two lines:

The World—formless and boundless!  
Nothing! Not self, not even Buddha.



#### 4. Indian Philosophy and the Metaphysical Movement in the United States

STILLSON JUDAH

WHEN LUTHER NAILED his theses to the Cathedral door at Wittenberg, probably few Catholic Bishops could foresee that it was like lighting a small flame which would soon blaze into the conflagration known later as the Reformation. Today also probably few Protestant theologians realize that the Metaphysical Movement has lit many small flames which are burning ever brighter outside the church—and within it.

William James was reported to have said concerning the New Thought movement that "together with Christian Science it constitutes a spiritual movement as significant for our day as the Reformation was for its time."<sup>1</sup>

Edmund D. Soper in his book, *The Inevitable Choice: Vedanta Philosophy or Christian Gospel*, has pointed to the impact of the Hindu Vedanta philosophy upon Christian America, but what now needs to be said is that both New Thought and Vedanta are only parts of a much larger pattern of thought, which we call the Metaphysical Movement. Although their groups are often small individually, and although there seems to be a great variety of ideas ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous, from deep mysticism to magic, theologically or philosophically these groups are probably closer to one another in thought than the denominations of Protestantism. Their impact is unifiedly against what they would term orthodox Christianity, and oriented toward Indian monism, which they either represent, or by which they have been heavily influenced. They are growing in power, because historically most of them are indigenous movements, which have adapted their thoughts to express the cultural patterns of many American people.

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<sup>1</sup> Braden, Charles S., *These Also Believe*, The Macmillan Company, 1956, p. 130.

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In this paper we shall consider briefly the contributions which India has made to the Metaphysical Movement in the United States and then consider some of the more important pure Hindu export philosophies.

The Metaphysical Movement must be distinguished from the formal division of philosophy because of its extension in meaning. It concerns itself with the reality beyond the physical, is ultimately monistic or gnostic rather than transcendently theistic; but above all, it offers a variety of psychological techniques whereby the adherent believes he will discover *that* reality for his general betterment.

All of these groups would agree that there are higher mental or spiritual laws which man may use to realize ultimate reality, and therefore they lay claim to being at once scientific and psychological in their approach to religion. All too would agree that man's real self is divine, and that man should think of God *ultimately* as an Absolute or Principle rather than as a personal God. In such a scheme the world is not regarded as an existential reality which man must confront, nor is there any positive or *real* existence of evil.

In this paper we shall discuss three major branches of indigenous metaphysical religions or philosophies out of which have proceeded a welter of small groups, but all of which could well have borne the stamp, "Made in India." These are New Thought, Spiritualism, and Theosophy.

#### UNITY IN DIVERSITY

In order to see the reason for the unity in the seeming diversity of the various thoughts we must go back to a thirty-year period in the last century which extended roughly from 1845 to 1875. This was a time in which many who had revolted against Christian orthodoxy were turning toward various occult practices. Anton Mesmer in the previous century had given them the principle of the hypnotic trance. Emmanuel Swedenborg, the Swedish scientist and seer, had written voluminously of his visions of the spiritual realm, and of his conversations with the inhabitants of heaven and hell while he was entranced. Andrew Jackson Davis, the Poughkeepsie seer, learned to put himself into a trance, and by 1843 had become a mesmeric healer and clairvoyant. During these states he, like Swedenborg, had visions of the heaven world, allegedly talked with the spirits, and gave forth a new philosophy of the universe, which in general was anti-Christian, and yet showed a Swedenborgian influence. His first book, *The Principles of Nature*, was published in



1847, and was followed by a large number of works, including his six volumes of *The Great Harmonia*.

We need spend little time here on Davis' philosophical ideas, except to say they fit somewhat into the Hindu philosophical pattern of thought. Davis regarded God as an Infinite Principle, all-in-all, Infinite Mind and Divine Mind. God was positive, and therefore a negative evil could not exist in reality. Man was but the finite expression of God.<sup>2</sup> Unlike the Hindus, however, Davis believed that man, a divine being, did not reincarnate after death, but advanced progressively toward God in higher spheres of reality.

When the Hydesville rappings of the Fox sisters startled the world in 1848, they gave rise to Spiritualism as an organized movement in the United States. As more and more people became Spiritualists, it was to Davis that they first turned for their philosophy.

It is interesting to note that both Phineas P. Quimby, the progenitor of the New Thought Movement, and Helena P. Blavatsky, one of the founders of Theosophy, had studied Spiritualism. Quimby had experimented with hypnotism on various subjects. The most noteworthy was Lucius Burkmar, who was alleged to have developed clairvoyant powers to discern people's illnesses, and to prescribe remedies which cured them. Then Quimby discovered that he could implant the thought of anything concrete in the mind of Burkmar, and so came to feel that this was the solution to Spiritualism, i.e., that the medium was merely visualizing the various thoughts of people in the audience. He also felt that many of the remedies which Burkmar had prescribed were too absurd to be efficacious, and finally concluded that the cure lay in the fact that the mind had been changed.<sup>3</sup>

Two of his patients, Warren Felt Evans (a Swedenborgian minister) and Julius Dresser, are given credit for the founding of the New Thought Movement, which today is influencing millions of Americans largely through the books, pamphlets, and periodicals published by the Church of Religious Science and the Unity School of Christianity. Another of his patients, Mary Baker Eddy, founded Christian Science. In the early period of New Thought the influence of Swedenborg is particularly noticed, but by far the greatest influence has come from the Hindu monistic philosophy through the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

<sup>2</sup> Davis, Andrew Jackson, *The Great Harmonia*. Sanborn, Carter, & Bazin, 1856, Vol. 2, pp. 288-293.

<sup>3</sup> Quimby, Phineas P., *The Quimby Manuscripts*. Ed. by Horatio W. Dresser, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1921, pp. 31-62.

Swedenborg through his voluminous *Arcana Coelestia* and other books had seemingly opened up the possibility of communication with the spirit world and his ideas were to bear fruits in nearly all metaphysical groups.

His two most lasting contributions were these: (1) since he believed that there was no conflict between science and religion, he made it possible for all the groups of the Metaphysical Movement to endeavor to make religion scientific; and (2), he gave them a philosophy of Biblical interpretation to support their contention.

Swedenborg, as a scientist, had long noted the discrepancies between science and a literal interpretation of the Bible. When God allegedly opened his spiritual vision to see into the spiritual world, Swedenborg learned that man possessed two natures, natural and spiritual, which were separated from each other by "discrete degrees," as cause and effect. The natural was effected and sustained by the spiritual and corresponded to it as a reflection. This he called the law of Correspondence. The literal interpretation of the Bible corresponded to man's natural condition, but he believed there was a higher spiritual interpretation that was not in conflict with science, which the spiritual vision could discern.<sup>4</sup> This allegorical or spiritual interpretation of the Bible found its way into the Metaphysical Movement, where it is still greatly used as a method of interpreting the Bible, so that there will be no conflict with the "scientific" metaphysical views.

Hermann Ficke<sup>5</sup> and B. R. Wilson have pointed out the dependence of Mary Baker Eddy upon a *Dictionary of Correspondence, Representatives and Significances Derived from the Word of the Lord: Extracted from the Writings of Emmanuel Swedenborg*, which was published in Boston in 1847. At least one-fifth of the terms in her *Glossary* appear in Swedenborg's list.<sup>6</sup> Charles Fillmore, who broke away from Christian Science to found with his wife the Unity School of Christianity, wrote a *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary* which gave a similar allegorical interpretation of the Biblical words.

The writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson had a greater effect upon the Metaphysical Movement. Emerson had been influenced by Swedenborg, and also by the Hindu monistic thought, after the Hindu

<sup>4</sup> Trobridge, George, *Swedenborg, Life and Teaching*, Swedenborg Foundation, 1955 *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> Ficke, Hermann, "The Sources of Science and Health," in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. LXXXV, No. 340, October 1928.

<sup>6</sup> Wilson B. R., "The Origins of Christian Science: a Survey," in the *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. LVII, January 1959, p. 165.

philosophical texts, the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavadgita*, had been translated into English.

In the conception of the Hindu Vedanta philosophy, which is based upon these works, the ultimate reality is God or Brahman, who is all and in all, an impersonal absolute without qualities. The soul or self of man is Brahman. Although the world and man are one with the Absolute, to the unenlightened man there is the appearance of a material world and a plurality of beings and things. This is due to *maya*, illusion. Illusion must not be understood in the sense that the world and matter do not exist, but rather that they are different from their appearance. When one has the mystic revelation of this oneness, the *karma* or fruits of his past are dissolved, the eternal round of rebirth occasioned thereby is ended, and he then stands above good and evil and the consequences of any actions. At death he will reincarnate no more, but may accept the eternal bliss of union with the Brahman or Absolute.

To say glibly that Emerson accepted all of the Hindu monistic thought would be an overstatement, because he derived ideas from many sources besides the Hindus, but it would seem that the larger part of his later ideas quite well agreed with the Hindu monistic view. It was, however, these ideas which were tending more toward pure Hindu monism that became the fundamental concepts of the New Thought Movement and, to a lesser extent, Spiritualism.

For Emerson the soul was to be considered divine, and as he said, "Excite the soul, and the weather and the town and your condition in the world all disappear; the world itself loses its solidity, nothing remains but the soul and the Divine Presence in which it lives."<sup>7</sup> For Emerson God, the Over-Soul, was the substrate of the soul and the universe.<sup>8</sup> "This union of all seas, all tides, all beings, or man and God is ineffable. Yet the simplest person who lovingly and with integrity worships God, becomes God,"<sup>9</sup> With this the Hindu could agree perfectly.

In denying personality to God, "because it is too little, not too much," he made the deity an indifferent God, who ruled the world by law of Compensation.<sup>10</sup> This law seems to have had its initial formulation in the mind of Emerson when he was very young, as we learn from one of his letters, but it was confirmed later when he learned of the

<sup>7</sup> Emerson, Ralph Waldo, *The Gospel of Emerson*. Ed. by Newton Dillaway, Montrose Press, 1944, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> Christy, Arthur, *The Orient in American Transcendentalism*, Columbia University Press, 1932, p. 77.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

Hindu law of *karma*, that every act bears its fruit, good or bad. It also gave greater strength to his idea that God ruled inexorably by law. Law was at the very base of God. Moral law was the counterpart of physical law. At this point he parted company again from Christian theism, for both *karma* and Compensation are unconscious principles which control the universe, and Emerson found no place in his writings for the grace and atonement of Christ, as an escape from sin.<sup>11</sup> Here again he influenced the thought of the Metaphysical Movement, which has made great use of his law of Compensation as one of its basic principles. We should, however, note that the formulation by Emerson seems finally to show the Swedenborg influence more than the Hindu. Emerson wrote: "Every act rewards itself, or in other words integrates itself, in a twofold manner; first in the thing, or in real nature; and secondly in the circumstance, or in apparent nature."<sup>12</sup>

New Thought has adapted this law by stating that when man realizes his divine nature, and places an affirmative thought into the Divine Mind, it will reproduce itself into the natural man or world, thus giving health, wealth, security, etc., because it is only through negative thinking that man does not realize the perfection and abundance which is really his by virtue of his divine nature, since God knows no lack.

Just as we have seen that Emerson regarded man's spiritual or real self as moral, so he regards good as being positive, and evil as merely privative, but not absolute. "All evil is so much death or nonentity. Benevolence is absolute and real."<sup>13</sup>

New Thought followed Emerson, but went beyond him to a point closer to Hindu Vedanta. Emily Cady, whose book *Lessons in Truth* has become one of the classics of New Thought, wrote as one of her denials:

First: There is no evil.

There is but one power in the universe, and that is God—Good. God is all good, and God is omnipresent. Apparent evils are not entities or things of themselves. They are simply an absence of the good, just as darkness is an absence of light. But God, or Good, is omnipresent, so the apparent absence of good (evil) is unreal. It is only an appearance of evil, just as the moving sun was an appearance.<sup>14</sup>

She then added as one of her denials: "Pain, sickness, poverty, old age, death, cannot master me, for they are not real."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 100-105.

<sup>12</sup> Emerson, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

<sup>13</sup> Emerson, *ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> Cady, Emily, *Lessons in Truth*, Unity School of Christianity, 1928, p. 38.

<sup>15</sup> Cady, *ibid.*, p. 39.

Vivekananda echoed this in his Vedanta: "Therefore know that thou art He; thou art the God of this universe . . . All these various ideas that I am . . . sick or healthy, or strong or weak . . . are but hallucinations."<sup>16</sup>

Helena P. Blavatsky, one of the founders of the Theosophical Society, had come from England to prove the validity of the phenomena of Spiritualism, but soon after the founding of the Society in New York she moved the headquarters to Adyar, India. Although interested in the study of psychic phenomena, the group forsook the Spiritualists for a higher form of psychism, which would be developed only through a "spotlessly pure moral life."<sup>17</sup> It is not our purpose to outline the views of Theosophy, which are well known, but rather to point out that the major portion of its philosophical ideas were drawn from Hinduism. It accepted a pantheistic view of the universe, the doctrine of *karma*, reincarnation, etc. Along with these concepts it proclaimed the existence of a Great White Brotherhood of Masters, an organization of persons who had evolved through many incarnations to the point where they had reached perfection. Thus they could take on physical bodies and live for hundreds of years in various places of the world, or else live in the higher realms beyond the physical. They were united to assist in the spiritual government of the world. Several of these allegedly had appeared to Madame Blavatsky not only to help found the Theosophical Society, but also to dictate to her or to give her the proper inspiration to write the various occult teachings in such books as the *Secret Doctrine* and *Isis Unveiled*.

Theosophy is more important in our study because of its influence upon the other metaphysical groups than as a single movement. It suffered its first schism in 1895, when most of the American section split away to form the Theosophical Society in America.

Various members also broke away to develop their own organizations. Alice Bailey founded the Arcane School, which again split to add the School of Esoteric Studies. Rudolf Steiner left Theosophy to organize Anthroposophy.

Theosophy has had an effect also upon some of the New Thought groups, but its greatest influence recently has been upon Spiritualism. Even a casual reader of the *Psychic Observer* for the past few years will surely

<sup>16</sup> Vivekananda, *The Yogas and Other Works*. Ed. by Swami Nikhilananda, New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1953, p. 308.

<sup>17</sup> American Section of the Theosophical Society, *A Primer of Theosophy*, Rajput Press, 1909, pp. 111-112.

have noticed the running battle between those who support the doctrine of reincarnation and those who deny it. Even the spirit of Madame Blavatsky has been brought into the séance to testify that she is sorry for having made such a horrible mistake as to teach reincarnation. Indeed if one is a frequenter of séances, he will notice how many mediums have Master séances, in which such well-known Theosophical Masters as Moriya and Khutumi as well as a host of others are heard.

Many of the Spiritualist churches are now leaning heavily upon Theosophical teachings, and even in the National Spiritualist Association of Churches, the group adhering largely to the philosophy of Andrew Jackson Davis, there are a number so minded. In recent years these teachings have led to a split in one of the churches.

Camp Chesterfield, Indiana, one of the leading Spiritualist camps in this country, is firmly ruled by Mabel Riffle, an orthodox member of the National Spiritual Association of Churches, but the mediums represent a number of different organizations. The official seminary, which operates there during the summer, was at one time that of the Spiritualist Episcopal Church founded by Robert Chaney and John Bunker. Robert Chaney, however, began to teach reincarnation and other Indian doctrines, which were against the principles of Mabel Riffle, and he was forced to discontinue his work there. With his wife Earlyne, he then founded the rapidly growing and influential Astara Foundation with its headquarters in Los Angeles.

#### ASTARA

Astara is termed the modern mystery school, and is a combination of Spiritualism, Theosophy and Hindu mysticism with something added. In its two Sunday church services held at 2:30 and 8:30 p.m., for the convenience of those who must first attend their Protestant churches, it offers communication with the spirit world through blindfold billet reading, but in a glamorous Hollywood setting not seen in other Spiritualist churches. It reaches its other thousands of Astarians throughout the United States by means of a series of secret correspondence courses, in which the adherent may study for various degrees. By means of this study one may be initiated into the art of a special secret type of "Hindu" Yoga, called Lama Yoga, which can cause the disciple to have contact with his "High Self." This contact is made by one's attunement with the Life Stream, known as the Holy Shabda (sound). "This Sonic Call, or Divine Sound, vibrates throughout God's Universe, and the Masters call



it the Music of the Spheres. This Divine Call actually can be heard when the Disciple has attained correct attunement."

The White Lodge of Astara is a Lodge of the Great White Brotherhood, and claims as its teachers some of the same Masters as Theosophy. By permission of one of the Masters it offers the hope that some may be initiated into this White Lodge of Astara.

#### VEDANTA

Let us now turn to India's export philosophy, which first came to America with the advent of Swami Vivekananda at the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893.

Vivekananda had been the disciple of Ramakrishna, the great Hindu saint of the last century, who at one period of his life practiced the disciplines of a number of major religions, and is alleged to have discovered that he could experience communion with God in all of them. His special deity was, however, Kali, the Divine Mother of the universe, an aspect of the Absolute. After his death when the Ramakrishna Order was established, Vivekananda was sent as its first missionary to America.<sup>18</sup> The results of Vivekananda's stay in America are seen in the various centers of the Vedanta Society in many of the larger cities of the United States.

Vivekananda, unlike his Master, was not able to find reality in a personal deity. His was probably the purest form of Vedanta as represented by Shankara's interpretation of the sacred *Upanishads*. He taught a devotion to God as the absolute Brahman without any qualities. Salvation was thus a complete loss of one's personality by union with the impersonal Brahman.<sup>19</sup>

"It would be illogical to go from the Personal God to the Impersonal and at the same time leave man as a person . . . The Person is only a phenomenon; the principle is behind it . . . Man is only apparently a person, but in reality he is Impersonal Being. God is a Person only apparently, but really He is Impersonal Being."<sup>20</sup>

The impact of Vedanta must not, however, be measured by the number of people who frequent its various centers, but by the number of its books from the pens of such men as Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, one of India's greatest scholars, and its vice-president; and by Swami

<sup>18</sup> Vivekananda, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-37, *passim*.

<sup>19</sup> Vivekananda, *ibid.*, pp. 188-190.

<sup>20</sup> Vivekananda, *ibid.*, pp. 280-281.

Akhilananda, head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of Boston. Hindus, however, have not been the only ones to write about their faith, because Christopher Isherwood's books, e.g., *Vedanta for the Western World* and *Vedanta for Modern Man*, not to mention Aldous Huxley's *Perennial Philosophy*, have added many new converts from the Protestant ranks.

#### SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP

Another wave of Hindu thought struck the United States when Paramhansa Yogananda, in the school of disciples of Ramakrishna, arrived in 1920 and established the Self-Realization Fellowship in Los Angeles. Since that time branch centers have been located in various cities all over the world.

Although Yogananda wrote a number of works, his *Autobiography of a Yogi*, first published in 1946, had already reached its seventh edition in nine years time, as well as having been translated into eight foreign languages, and with editions in four other languages being prepared. Through this and his other books, as well as through the bimonthly *Self-Realization Magazine* and weekly correspondence course lessons, thousands in many countries are being influenced by his teachings.

While visiting at the Self-Realization Fellowship headquarters last year, the writer inquired from Brother Kriyananda whether there was any difference between the thought of Yogananda and that of Vedanta, to which he replied that there was not, except that Yogananda used a superior type of Yoga, known as Kriya Yoga. According to the *Autobiography* this type had been lost for centuries, only to be rediscovered by a great Yogi in the last century. It is supposed to be the same type which Krishna gave to Arjuna, as depicted in the *Bhagavadgita*, "and which was later known to Patanjali, and to Christ, St. John, St. Paul, and other disciples."<sup>21</sup> No matter what efficacy his Yoga may have for an individual, it is unfortunate that in so many cases, of which the above is an example, he should have tried to make the Bible into a Hindu classic by faulty exegesis, metaphysical interpretations and completely unfounded statements.

#### RUHANI SAT SANGA

When Sant Kirpal Singh came to the United States from India in 1955, it marked the beginning of another new movement, the Ruhani Sat Sanga. It would seem that wherever he spoke, a new group was founded. At the present time there are already seventeen or more groups

<sup>21</sup> Yogananda, Paramhansa, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1946, p. 244.

well distributed geographically over the entire United States, but with four, as might be expected, in California. One of the factors that favors the increase of this group is that all its literature, which consists largely of mimeographed circulars, may be obtained *gratis* from Mr. T. S. Khanna of Washington, D. C., although the headquarters are in India.

Like other Hindu groups in America, the thought is ultimately monistic, but the Ruhani Sat Sanga has some distinguishing characteristics. They believe that no one can contact God without the aid of a *living* Master, who will be able to give a true inner experience to the devotee at the very first sitting. Before one can have this inner experience, which takes place at the time of initiation, one must, however, become a vegetarian, refrain from the use of tobacco or any alcoholic beverage for at least three months. Then upon the vow that he will continue on this path and completely surrender himself to the Master, he may be initiated. At the time of his initiation the devotee is instructed concerning a "superior" type of Yoga known variously as the Surat Shabda Yoga or Sahj Yoga, the Yoga of the Sound Current.<sup>22</sup>

Mr. Khanna said that during the initiation the person actually experiences himself leaving his body, thus going through the same process as though he had died. Through the power of the Master the initiate loses all fear of death. By means of this Yoga the individual may be able to develop quickly, so that he can visit the Master on the higher planes of reality beyond the physical. If he is a Christian, he will be able to see and talk with Jesus.

I learned from Mr. Khanna and from others that real salvation can only come through a *living* Master, and they inferred that Sant Kirpal Singh was that one. Other groups may attain unification on one of the lower realms, but only a living Master can guide the devotee to the higher planes where others cannot go to gain the highest union.

Dr. Julian Johnson, formerly a Baptist missionary to India and a physician, who became converted by Kirpal Singh's predecessor, Hazur Baba Singh, has written the chief book of the group, entitled *The Path of the Masters*. According to Dr. Johnson the Masters of the Great White Brotherhood of the Theosophical Society (and of Astara) are recognized, but it is his contention that their chief concern is "to guide the world in peace and righteousness," rather than an individual's salvation.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *Man Know Thyself*, Published by the Ruhani Sat Sanga, Gurmandi, Delhi, 1954, pp. 5-9.

<sup>23</sup> Johnson, Julian, *The Path of the Masters; the Science of Surat Shabda Yoga*, Published by the Sawan Service League, Beas (Punjab), India, 1939, pp. 113-116.

In this brief outline of the philosophical interrelatedness among the principal metaphysical groups in America and of their indebtedness to Hindu thought, one must stress again that the challenge to Christian theism is not just Vedanta or New Thought but the entire Metaphysical Movement with its great variety of aims and individual doctrines, because the impact theologically is one.

A study of about fifty of these groups which are bidding for national importance shows that in some cases their influence is about ninety per cent beyond that of their membership and is affecting not only many Protestant laymen, but also Protestant ministers.

Finally, in characterizing the Metaphysical Movement we must notice that most of its groups are in some way experiential. A Spiritualist may feel that he has received experiential knowledge of reality through psychic phenomena; the Vedantist endeavors to experience his oneness with God through Yoga discipline; an adherent to New Thought seeks to realize oneness with God, and experiences proof of his belief by means of positive prayer.

May we not see in the Metaphysical Movement the opposite pole from that other popular experiential religion—Revivalism?

With the threat of annihilation from an atom bomb more and more people are turning from a religion of authority to metaphysical types of thinking which promise them experiential knowledge of that reality, which they claim to secure by the pragmatic test of scientific principles.

Protestantism is losing the initiative to these metaphysical groups. Although the Protestant ministry must still preach out against sin and evil because we must not dispose of these as illusory, yet in these perilous times, if the Protestant minister does not play a greater role as physician of each individual soul, the metaphysician will play it for him.

## 5. *Jung's Psychology and Religion*

ELEANOR BERTINE

THE SUBJECT I was originally asked to discuss was the religious interpretation of the researches of Dr. C. G. Jung. But since I am not a theologian, I am by no means qualified to speak of psychology from a metaphysical point of view. However, as I have been a practising analyst for nearly forty years, I can, as it were, look through the other end of the telescope and view the religious experience in the light of Jung's psychological studies. Indeed, as he himself has frequently pointed out, some such appraisal has been forced upon the psychotherapist because the majority of his patients have come to him with an urgent spiritual problem involving questions of good and evil and of belief in God, problems which have acquired a critical importance for many people in this atomic age.

For the last two thousand years theologians have been concerned with the formulation of the Christian answer to these questions and an elaborate metaphysical structure of dogma has grown up to meet the need. This structure has given form to the religious life of the Occident for many centuries. Through it the people gained a connection with ultimate values and meanings that brought them satisfaction and made life seem worth all the struggle and suffering which loom so darkly over human existence. And, probably most important of all to the individual, the insecurity of his personal conscience was replaced by the certainty afforded by the authority of the Church.

Over the years, however, the influence of the Church has waned. Religion no longer plays the dominant role it used to do, the center of the stage has been claimed by material science and the undreamed-of powers that it has unleashed. The result has been that, while men have become more and more potent in the outer world, they have drifted into greater impotence in the inner realm. At the same time psychological forces on a grand scale have caused a world-wide split of humankind into two antagonistic camps which are both working frantically, and all too efficiently, on

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the means of producing the most complete destruction. Yet this world drama is but the reflection of what is going on in the decentered psyche, and in their dilemma many people are turning to the doctor for help instead of the minister, priest or rabbi.

## I

The recognition that the sickness of many of his patients was essentially a spiritual one created a real difficulty for the medical man. His training is scientific and not religious; yet he found that the cure even of bodies frequently depends upon the cure of souls. If he suggested going back to the pastor, the answer usually was that that had been tried and it didn't help. As a scientific man he could not fall back upon the tempting techniques of mere suggestion or the hocus pocus of the shaman, though these may work for a while. His whole loyalty to scientific truth cut him off from belief in assertions not based upon adequate evidence. And he could not recommend his patients to have faith when he did not have it himself.

However, he did have the invaluable tool of scientific method, this greatest achievement of Western thought, and with it, Dr. Jung felt, it might be possible, by examining the data of religious dogma and the religious experience of individuals, to find an interpretation which would meet the psychological needs of his patients without violating their intellectual integrity. The enlargement of the boundaries of psychological research that has taken place in recent years, especially from the work of Jung himself, has brought such an enterprise within our reach and given it promise of success, for it has provided a conceptual background for some real understanding of religious phenomena, at least on the psychological plane.

But this investigation has its own peculiar difficulties. Its field of research, namely the psyche, is nonmaterial and is not limited to the sphere of the intellect. Actually a large part of it is not only unknown, as is the solution of any problem under investigation, but it is essentially unknowable except through the medium of symbols. Symbols, however, do not lend themselves to scientific exactness, for by definition they refer to a reality that cannot be "comprehended," that is, included, contained by the mind, nor can their limits be accurately laid down. Human consciousness exists, as it were, on a little island in the sea of the dark unknown. A few steps in any direction and one comes to the limits of knowledge, perhaps of the knowable.

But from the beginning of life on earth adaptations had to be made



to the unknown. Such adaptations may be by way of instinct, a sort of pre-existent pattern of action that guides the individual all unaware, as in the case of migrating birds. Man, however, who has acquired a greater degree of consciousness, is guided not only by instinct, but in addition by inborn patterns of apperception, *the archetypes*, which appear in consciousness in the form of *symbols* or archetypal images. These lie apparently dormant in the unconscious until some circumstance of life stirs the appropriate one into activity.

Jung defines a symbol as the best possible expression of an unknown or only partly known, that is, unconscious, fact of the psyche. He says, "They are not allegories" (that is, fabricated analogies) "and not signs" (a conscious use of one object to represent another, as in a trademark); "they are images of contents which for the most part, transcend consciousness." At the level of awareness of the child or the primitive tribesman, there is little or no differentiation between the inner world of symbols and outer reality, for inner subjective contents are projected to outer objects, which then are invested with the meaning and emotional value belonging to the projected content. So the primitive actually experiences a particular group of trees as the "sacred" grove, a particular house as the "haunted" house, or a particular woman as the "witch" woman. Here the part played by the symbol is of course quite unrealized. Obviously the subjective contents thus projected do not come from the conscious part of the psyche, but from some source in the depths of the unconscious.

With a step further in psychological sophistication, the inner image may no longer be projected to an actual material object but will be hypostasized, that is, regarded as having a metaphysical existence of its own independent of the psyche. These hypostasized images frequently appear in personified form. They then give rise to the manifold gods and demons, the gremlins and poltergeists and all the mana-creatures which have played such a powerful role in human life and which Jung sees as symbolic projections of actual forces at work in the unconscious.

It is evident that the process of symbol projection is by no means limited to childish or primitive people. It is the most common cause of failure to see things as they are. Every one of us who has any self-realization can see that this has happened myriads of times in his own experience, nor can we flatter ourselves that it is entirely a thing of the past. So long as unconscious contents are not realized as such, they will either be projected to some object, the apperception of which will then be distorted, or the

symbolic image which they express will be taken to have literal objective reality. Thus they are either embodied in some person or thing, or they create a new mythical figure for themselves. Indeed the process of becoming conscious consists, to a considerable extent, of peeling projections off the outside world and assimilating them as contents of the psyche, where they may, to some extent at least, be understood and a relation to them established.

It is easy to see that the multitude of ancient and primitive gods derive from the psychology of their worshipers. But it is far harder to recognize that the same thing may have been at the root of even the most advanced religions. Projection or hypostasization of actual subliminal contents, we have seen, was inevitable until very recent times, for it is only modern psychology with its discovery of the deep unconscious that has made possible the differentiation between a projection and a true perception. In the actual experience they are identical. Hence the impact of the God-archetype *had* to be projected at first in order to become conscious at all. But now at last the projected image may be taken symbolically and, with our new knowledge of depth psychology and the old method of meditation, a new way may be opened of understanding the tremendous meaning of religious experience as a psychological reality.

But merely to dissolve a projection by realizing it intellectually as such is far from changing anything in the projected material, except to drive it out of one form into another. Unless its meaning is assimilated, its quota of energy will do one of three things: it will either invest some other object in a new projection, or it will be introjected and identified to the ego, or it will be realized for what it is, a symbol holding a secret meaning for the individual which he must decipher.

For instance, take the God-image, which is the symbol of the supreme value in life. This value cannot be put into words, but it exists, whether consciously or not, and, when it expresses a living encounter and not a mere convention, it becomes the unconditional motivating power. On the other hand, faith in one's previous idea of God may become, for one reason or another, no longer possible. The divine projection may fade. Then some man-made institution like the State may be deified in its stead. Or it may be a *Führer*, creating a religious fanaticism centering on his person. But in any case the projection to a transcendent God has deteriorated into a slave-like worship of a man-made institution or leader, whose cult results in extinguishing the soul.

The second alternative when a God-image dies is that the ego identifies itself with the symbol and a disastrous inflation results.

The third possibility is that the numinous content that had been felt as God is no longer personified but can be related to as the central inner reality and goal, which psychology calls the Self and which now becomes the source of the sense of meaning and value in the individual life previously expressed by a personal God. This value becomes increasingly conscious through a devoted and sacrificial, a truly religious attitude. Not only is it the compass by which every choice of direction is made, but it also seems to create the energy with which the conscious ego may play its part in bringing into reality the unique potentiality of a total human being. As a bare intellectual formulation this result must appear pale and ghostly as against the guidance of a loving Father in heaven. But if it has come from an actual contact with the inner core of life, it has the impressiveness and the convincing authority which was once conceivable only as a personal God.

## II

To the many religious people who find it difficult to admit the possibility that the reality of the divine figures that have brought comfort and hope into their lives may be symbolic rather than metaphysical, Jung's advice would certainly be to hold on to their faith, for psychology no more attempts to disprove than to prove the existence of a divine being. He says: "Faith is a charisma for those who possess it, but it is no way for those who need to understand before they can believe. This is a matter of temperament, and cannot be discarded as valueless. . . . Although we naturally *believe* in symbols in the first place, we can also understand them, and this is indeed the only viable way for those who have not the charisma of faith."<sup>1</sup> The discovery that, while the facts of the inner life remain the same, the interpretation can and indeed should change with the changing conditions of the times and the stages of psychic development, has restored for many people the possibility of a genuinely religious relation to life in a period when that is a more desperate need than ever. And this without the necessity for belief in the tenets of any established religion whose ultimate source is divine revelation.

In the attempt to deal with the problem resulting from the scientific criticism of religion, many conscientious people who found this reasoning unanswerable repudiated the supernatural and miraculous elements, to-

<sup>1</sup> Jung, C. G., *Symbols of Transformation*, Coll. Works Vol. 5, Bollingen Series XX. New York: Pantheon Books, 1956, p. 231. Used by permission of the Bollingen Foundation.

gether with all that offended their rational sense in the rich tapestry of myths and images that is the gift of Christianity, and retained only the human part, the story of Jesus and his teachings. In this way they accepted him as a great man and a great prophet, but stripped him of the numinous quality that belonged to his divinity. There remained only ethics and the fine example of an outstandingly unique personality. But of religion nothing was left, nothing beyond the ordinary human being except in degree, nothing that was not quite rational and understandable, and, in a sense, unimportant. The pendulum had swung from the extreme of credence to the extreme of rationality, which was even worse.

But it did not stop swinging there. On the recoil the same passion for truth which had exacted such a price subsequently revealed that the price was not required! The apparent necessity to renounce the idea of the validity of the suprapersonal and the numinous was shown to be due, not to their supposed unreality, but to the projection of the religious images which express the universal facts of the psyche to a realm outside itself, that is, to the objective world. There the familiar criteria for establishing truth or falsity applied, and to refuse to abide by them was a step backwards into obscurantism and superstition. The God-myth, and indeed all metaphysical statements, if taken concretely, do not measure up to the ordinary standard of credibility; but if interpreted as psychological experiences, they do not come under the same laws that govern the material world.

It has been too easy for modern people, however, after they found that the current scientific ideas were of no help in understanding religion, to fall back on "common sense"—that is, a point of view arising from a combination of the ideas of the personal ego and the collective *mores*. Naturally this could not get beyond the all-too-human conscious self. Though no one has ever touched the limits of the unconscious psyche which Jung calls the collective unconscious, and it seems to be no less extensive than the outer universe, Jung has been bitterly criticized for reducing God to being only a part of the human personality, because he finds Him through the psyche. It seems almost impossible to get any realization of the fact that, just as the outer world in which we are contained is not a part of ourselves, so also the inner world in which our egos are contained is likewise a separate nonpersonal entity, with its own facts and its own connections which are not necessarily the rational ones of cause and effect.

It is too often assumed that the psyche can be known by simple introspection; and that this dimension of unknown extent, of strange content and unfamiliar ways of functioning, should be comprehensible to the man in

the street without even the amount of special study that would be required to make one electric machine. But this is the veritable realm of the "supernatural," of myth and miracle and madness, of vision and bizarre ideas, of damnation and redemption and healing, which reveals even fairy tales to be a manifestation in symbolic form of the truth of the inner world. Does anyone imagine it is easy to understand!

### III

It was in his consulting room that Jung explored these psychological happenings. He found that the course of an analysis was often punctuated by occurrences that were so unexpected that they seemed more like myths than the ordinary events in a doctor's office. He saw that major problems always arise from a conflict in the unconscious in which the decision cannot be made in favor of either side without damage to an essential part of the psyche. But the tension produced by the insoluble conflict activates the unconscious and may stir up dreams containing symbols that point the way in which the antagonistic elements can be reconciled *for the dreamer*.

The reconciliation is never a mere compromise, by which the old self can handle the situation, nor is it in terms of a generally applicable principle or truth to which the will is to be subjugated. Instead it is a way between the opposites, involving an individual relation to both. This individual solution is expressed by a symbol connecting the dreamer with his unique totality, his Selfhood, which in its nature is a *coincidentia oppositorum*. Thus the dream shows that the solution is by way of a transcendence of the problem by becoming a more complete person. Expressed symbolically, this is a process of rebirth, whereby the dreamer rises to a higher level of consciousness. The symbolic form of expression is called for because it is not a matter of a mere change of the conscious point of view, capable of rational formulation, but of an actual transformation taking place in the inner man. Hence it hardly needs to be said that the experience is by no means only an intellectual matter. On that plane it would be as ridiculous and impotent as Nicodemus thought it when he asked his famous question about being expected to enter into his mother's womb to be born again. The answer of Jesus makes absolutely clear the difference between material and symbolic truth and releases the inner or spiritual reality from its complete identification with matter.

Such a transformation may happen in the consulting room. I say "may happen" rather than making a positive statement that it *will* happen, because such things cannot be consciously controlled or managed to suit our-

selves. They are the result of the intervention of the deep unconscious and take place only when the inner state of the patient is ready. Theologians would say that they were more a matter of grace than of works or of human wisdom. There has usually been a great deal of preliminary work on the personal unconscious of the patient to be done first. There are some people who would not necessarily be considered stupid, nor are they unintellectual, but who might aptly be called "prepsychological," for their ideas and values are exclusively concrete, material and personal. That is to say, they are, as it were, psychologically muscle-bound, imprisoned within the limits of the known and the rationally knowable. For them, the impact of the totally Other within the psyche is most disorienting, and they need to have experienced the validity of the guidance that may be given by the unconscious in the personal sphere through dreams, etc., before the depths can safely be plumbed. Furthermore, not everyone needs to experience the profundities of the psyche in analysis. Some people come out of curiosity, in which case they get nothing, unless, of course, their attitude changes; others have had a personal problem that can be resolved relatively easily without going down to its archetypal roots. But when the deep unconscious begins to speak, it produces a numinosity that is found elsewhere only in the realm of religion.

There are dreams portraying the psychological process as a journey or a quest, of climbing a mountain or going into the bowels of the earth; there are dreams of the drawing of boundaries, a circle or a square, perhaps one inside the other, or the circle may contain a cross; dreams of birth, marriage, death, unions and transformations; of finding the supreme value, whose symbol may be a flower, a star, the crystallization of a jewel and the gold or the philosopher's stone, which are the goal of the alchemical transformation of base metals. These and many other symbols of transformation, such as rebirth by emergence from a cave or dark tunnel or from the water, and finally, dreams of deification and of the divine presence may appear at some time of crisis. All are images of events in the psyche, in many cases, though not necessarily, stimulated by the analytic process which, in its later stages, becomes a quest to find the preformed way of the soul. This is no less than the integration of all the conflicting elements of the psyche in a super-ordinated totality, the Self. This goal is inherent in the psyche. It is never—never can be—imposed upon the patient by the doctor's suggestion, for he, no more than the patient, knows in advance what the Self of the patient should turn out to be.

It will be immediately apparent that all the symbols of the integration



process that I have mentioned, as well as the many thousands of others that might be added, have played a part in the symbolism of some religion, most of them occurring not merely in one but in many faiths. The more developed the religion, the richer and more meaningful will be the context of the symbol formation. Indeed, Jung has said that the multitude of profound and beautiful symbols that cluster around the figure of Jesus Christ so resemble those of the Self met with in his psychological work, that for some time he hesitated to make up his mind which was the symbol of the other. He later decided for the primacy of the Self, largely because it represented, on the psychological plane, the universal goal of all life, completeness, while the figure of the Christ exemplified perfection. These two aims are incompatible.

Jung's approach to religion is empirical—it grew out of the observation of conscious and unconscious processes, both in his patients and in himself. Also it is never merely reductive, merely a “nothing but.” He looks for the meaning of the observed phenomena, the key to which he found to be the symbol. Accordingly he takes myth and metaphysical statements as well as religious experience to be psychological data requiring symbolic interpretation and reinterpretation as greater consciousness is achieved. The results of his own research have made this reinterpretation necessary, for it has brought a knowledge of a new dimension, that of the collective unconscious, which appears to be the proximate source of religious experience. What reality lies beyond that we cannot know. God is beyond human comprehension. But so also is the totality of the Self. Yet neither is wholly strange, for they both represent the image in which man is made; one is a psychological, the other a metaphysical formulation. The psychological interpretation makes it possible to accept the full reality and value of religious experience without the need for metaphysical explanations. The numinousness and efficacy remain intact as symbols instead of supernatural events. But at a time when our ideas of matter are being reinterpreted by the new physics it should hardly be surprising that the ideas in the much more subtle nonmaterial realm should also require reinterpretation.

#### IV

Before closing I want to let Jung speak for himself in a few direct quotations, mostly from a recent quite wonderful little book, *The Undiscovered Self*: “This is not to say that Christianity is finished. I am, on the contrary, convinced that it is not Christianity, but our conception and interpretation of it, that has become quite antiquated in the face of the present

world situation. The Christian symbol is a living thing that carries within itself the seeds of further development. It can go on developing; it depends only on us, whether we can make up our minds to meditate again, on the Christian premises."<sup>2</sup> But to be effective, this demands a new attitude, one in which the "facts of faith" are not treated in the same context as the "facts of science." "The religious impulse rests on an instinctive basis and is therefore a specifically human function." . . . "When any natural human function gets lost, i.e., is denied conscious and intentional expression, a general disturbance results. Hence it is quite natural that with the triumph of the Goddess of Reason a general neuroticizing of modern man should set in, a dissociation of personality analogous to the splitting of the world to-day by the Iron Curtain."<sup>3</sup> The unconscious is "the medium from which the religious experience seems to flow. As to what further cause of such an experience may be, the answer to this lies beyond the range of human knowledge. Knowledge of God is a transcendental problem."<sup>4</sup>

Then a few words from another work: "The religious myth is one of man's greatest and most significant achievements, giving him the strength not to be crushed by the monstrousness of the universe. . . . Considered from the standpoint of realism, the symbol is not of course an external truth, but it is practically true, for it was and is the bridge to all that is best in humanity."<sup>5</sup> "Christ, from the point of view of psychology . . . is a typical manifestation of the Self. For psychology the self is an *imago Dei* and cannot be distinguished from it empirically. The two ideas are therefore of the same nature."<sup>6</sup> "Psychological truth by no means excludes metaphysical truth, though psychology, as a science, has to hold aloof from all metaphysical assertions. Its subject is the psyche and its contents. Both are realities because they work."<sup>7</sup>

Now back to the first book: "The danger that a mythology understood too literally, and as taught by the Church, will suddenly be repudiated lock, stock and barrel, is to-day greater than ever. Is it not time that the Christian mythology, instead of being wiped out, was understood symbolically?"<sup>8</sup> "It is tragic that science and its philosophy discourages the

<sup>2</sup> Jung, C. G., *The Undiscovered Self*. Boston: Little Brown & Company (Atlantic Press Books), 1957, pp. 62-63. Used by permission of the publisher.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>5</sup> *Symbols of Transformation*, p. 231.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 392.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>8</sup> *The Undiscovered Self*, p. 38.

individual and that theology resists every reasonable attempt at an understanding of its symbols. They call their creed 'Symbolum,' but they refuse to call their truth 'symbolic.'"<sup>9</sup> "If the flow of instinctive dynamism into our life is to be maintained, as is absolutely necessary for our existence, then it is imperative that we remold these archetypal forms into ideas which are adequate to the challenge of the present."<sup>10</sup>

And the depth psychology of C. G. Jung is making this essential transformation possible.

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<sup>9</sup> C. G. Jung in an open letter to Upton Sinclair, published in the *New Republic*, Feb. 21, 1955, pp. 30-31.

<sup>10</sup> *The Undiscovered Self*, p. 70.

# Have Christians an Answer?

## I. The Issue: Ultimate Meaning in History

CARL MICHALSON

### I

THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL is a proclamation which strikes the ear of the world with the force of a hint. Some "get it"; some do not. To those who do, it is "the power of God unto salvation." To those who do not, it can seem a scandal and an offense. The scandal and offense of Christianity is that a bare hint in history should become the occasion for something the whole course of history taken together cannot provide. That is the sense of ultimacy which a Christian experiences when he hears about Jesus of Nazareth as the word of God. If the gospel scandalizes and offends when it is preached, however, the ministers of God can know they have failed in their proclamation. For the purpose of the gospel is reconciliation with God and not offense. The purpose of the hint is the illumination of human experience with ultimate significance. When the act of proclamation gives way to acts of examination into its truth value, it is a clear sign that the proclamation has failed. Not that such an examination is ruled out, or even unprofitable; but only that to be examined does not fulfill the intention in the proclamation.

Christianity can never be more than a hint in history. Its subject is the eternal God, but its mode of communication is history, and in history nothing is evidently eternal. Christianity need never be more than a hint, because where its proclamation is heard, it creates the possibility of an ultimately meaningful life. That meaning reorganizes man's whole experience at a new level of significance. The New Testament calls it the New Age—the body of Christ, eternal life. In this respect the hint has the revelatory power of a clue. It does not say everything there is to say. It simply supplies what is lacking to make the story of our life complete. Christianity *ought* never be more than a hint, because anything stronger

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conveys a falsely expanded, hence misleading impression of the eternal's verifiability under conditions of history.

The first Christians who caught and communicated the faith could scarcely have anticipated its consequences for the very structure of history as we experience it today. "History as we know it now began with Christ," Uncle Kolia says in *Doctor Zhivago*, "and . . . Christ's Gospel is its foundation." What that means is not so favorable to the Christian cause as it may sound. The hint about the availability of ultimate meaning to history has made mankind restless with an existence which pursues its ends without such hints. It has given rise not only to obedience to God, which was its purpose. It has also set off such protean human efforts to achieve ultimacy within history as states like Soviet Russia project. In that sense it is true to say that Communism is a Christian heresy and that the Marxian philosophy of history is a secularized Christian eschatology.

On the other hand, since it has suggested the historical reality of ultimate gratifications, the Christian proclamation has sponsored a deep-seated historical despair, the fear arising from the fact that such gratifications have not seemed forthcoming. Although the American historian, Herbert J. Muller, deplors it, he is correct when he observes that "the absolutist tradition of Christendom leads men to assume that if we don't have absolute standards we can't have any standards, and that if we are not standing on the Rock of Ages we are standing on nothing."<sup>1</sup> Existential nihilism is the result. To say as it does that nothing significant is ultimately possible in history identifies existentialism as a secular offspring of the Christian line.

Where history has been given the sense of absoluteness in life, the very structure of historical existence is changed. It is the intention of the Christian proclamation that mankind should receive its life from beyond itself, which is a life by grace. That would be to have a history in an ultimately meaningful sense. The failure of the world to get that hint from the Christian faith expresses itself in either revolt or resignation. The man in revolt denies there are such gratifications as Christians speak of and sets up rival absolutes. The resigned man settles for life at some less than absolute level, taking minor gratifications from the perishing moments of a history that is ultimately destined to die.

Like Archibald MacLeish's J. B., who fails to catch the hint in God's silence, the nihilist resolves to rebuild his life upon a perishing humanity.

<sup>1</sup> Muller, H. J., *The Uses of the Past*, Mentor Books, 1952, p. 47.

Blow on the coal of the heart.  
The candles in churches are out.  
The lights have gone out in the sky.  
Blow on the coal of the heart  
And we'll see by and by . . .<sup>2</sup>

Like Albert Camus' restless, Biblical-type heroes, he satisfies his taste for ultimacy in a form of "mysticism with the world." Some fevered prisoners of the world have been known to see the face of the Holy Mother of God on the walls of their cell. Camus' nihilist sees only the face of Marie, his mistress. In history one can learn to settle for minor gratifications. But in a time that has heard there are ultimate gratifications, such a settlement turns every intercourse with the world into what Camus seems willing to call an experience of being "taken in adultery." Nihilistic forgiveness for inadequate adjustments to life inheres in the heroism with which one goes about them. The hero knows that simply the fact that life is ultimately meaningless does not mean one may not salvage meanings.

## II

Revolt and resignation are kindred efforts to cope with the history to which Christian proclamation has given rise, the history in which it has been revealed that there is an absolute meaning in life. The significant thing about the new religious situation in the world today, then, is not that Christendom is now becoming a mission field for non-Christian religions. That fact is a mere accident of history. The world is now small enough and the economic strength of non-Western religions large enough to facilitate such reciprocal missions. Nor is the significant thing that the religions with which Christendom is now being confronted are themselves "post-Christian," meeting Christianity with positions already accommodated to Christianity. The really significant thing about the mission to America today is that for the first time in its history Christianity is encountering the non-Christian religions in the framework of a history which Christianity itself has formed. It is a history in which the thirst for ultimate meaning has been induced and in which the failure to drink expresses itself as revolt and resignation. The effect of the encounter between the religions within that framework should, therefore, be markedly different from the effect the encounter has had upon the soil of non-Christian cultures. It is no longer simply the paramouncy of Christianity as a religion which is being

<sup>2</sup> MacLeish, A., *J. B.*, Scene 11. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1958. Used by permission of the publisher.



placed in question. The very desirability of any ultimacy within history is now being challenged.

The eagerness with which non-Christian missions have come to America is rooted in the very characteristic which has made it so difficult for Christianity to succeed on non-Christian soil. Christianity in the past has been blocked in its mission because of the apparent satisfaction of non-Christian cultures with less than ultimacy in history. Now Christians are being made the object of a mission by these very religions which have made their peace with historical meaninglessness. Their chief success will, therefore, be among the rebellious and resigned who experience the structure of Christendom without having appropriated its substance.

Islam, for instance, affirms the existence of the absolute God but denies he is really present in history. For that reason the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation of God in Christ is the chief target of its apologists. Christians can make Jesus Christ the source and the form of their existence, the beginning of their new age, because God is believed to be present in him. Jesus Christ then becomes the focus for both the understanding of God and the understanding of man. On the other hand, Mohammed for Islam is the final prophet, the miraculous author of the final book, in the light of whose finality Jesus is only a penultimate figure. It is understandable by that canon that the transcendent reality of God is needed by Islam to account for both Jesus and Mohammed, but that nothing in history—neither Jesus nor Mohammed—can be said to account for the reality of God.<sup>3</sup>

The only historical finality known to Islam is the chronological finality by which the prophet is believed to say the last word for God. The finality which Christianity sees in history is an attribute of the presence of the fullness of the Godhead bodily in Jesus of Nazareth. Islam is said to combine the absolute monotheism of Judaism with the universalism of Christianity. That is a misleading part-truth. For that combination overlooks the real genius of the New Testament faith, which is its particularism. In the New Testament a single event is endowed with finality by virtue of the presence of God in history. The possibility of an ultimately meaningful history is formed by that event. The absence from Islam of this sort of particularism could well account for the fact that so syncretistic and universalistic a "religion" as Bahai had its source in Islam.

Vedanta affirms the reality of ultimate truth but denies that it can be embodied anywhere in history. Its chief missionary target, therefore, is the

<sup>3</sup> See the account of Islam by Edmund Perry, *The Gospel in Dispute*, Doubleday & Company, 1958, Chapter VI.

exclusiveness found in self-conscious Christianity. The quasi-religious meta-psychology of C. G. Jung has much in common with the Vedanta mission to the Western world. As Jung has said, "To the psychologist there is nothing more stupid than the standpoint of the missionary who pronounces the gods of the 'poor heathen' to be illusions."<sup>4</sup> The statement by itself would be applauded by current Christian mission circles. What it intends to convey, however, ought not be classified as missionary etiquette but as theology. For Vedanta the statement would imply that the ultimate is too deep and still to enter the concrete and transitory life of history. That witness should leave a dearth in history from which man would wish to flee as from a desert.

For psychology, according to Jung, the statement means that "anything that acts for us is real, irrespective of the name we give it." When Sigmund Freud, therefore, wrote *The Future of an Illusion*, he could not have meant the same by "religion" as Jung did. Freud anticipated a day when religious ideas would wither away because their usefulness as emotional props had been superseded by psychological stability. Jung, on the other hand, anticipates a day when the universality of historico-religious symbols will be achieved by a movement toward trans-historical archetypal symbols. Vedanta's mission shares that goal. When it comes about it will be seen that the contest between Christianity and "heathenism," between enlightenment and superstition, was avoidable. All religious symbols are believed to participate in some nonhistorical realm of common human validities. Individual histories are therefore translatable beyond individuality into that collective humanity through a *participation mystique*.<sup>5</sup>

Christians find, on the other hand, that the naming of God is not a matter of indifference. "The God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ" is a God who makes himself known. That is the ultimacy in which Christians are involved. Furthermore, the God whom Jesus names makes himself known not beyond or beneath our individual histories, but within them. That indicates the *historical* ultimacy of the Christian's archetype. Historical meditation is of the essence of a faith in which it is believed that God is present in history. All history is thought to derive its hope from the event in which God is named. That is why Christians hold so stubbornly to their vocation to witness that the ultimate hope of history is tied up with "the name that is above every name." The indissolubility of the Christian witness, however, ought not be looked upon as an axis of exclusion.

<sup>4</sup> Jung, C. G., *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, Harcourt Brace (Harvest Book), 1955, p. 72.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

It is really only the access to the possibility of a finally meaningful history.

Ramakrishna, the modern Hindu saint and foremost inspiration of the Vedanta mission, took as a motto for his movement *Siva-Seva*, God and service. There are also expressions of responsibility toward the world among Hindus in India today, such as the "Land Gift" movement of the venerable Vinoba Bhave. But the Vedanta position does not support this practical concern for history in principle. Contrariwise, while Christians default in their responsibility toward the world in practice, their faith does support historical responsibility in principle.

### III

Zen Buddhism, like modern existentialism, abandons all hope in an historical absolute. Unlike existentialism, however, it can do so without agony. All the methods by which Zen justifies its life in history are characterized by abstraction and esthetic detachment. In this sense, the "beat Zen" of the Americans, Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, is closer to existentialism (and Christianity) than the rather "square Zen" of the former Episcopal priest, Alan Watts. Ginsberg must

live  
in the physical world  
moment to moment  
  
I must write down  
every recurring thought—  
stop every beating second.

Watts himself leans toward the more orthodox Zen. He prefers *Haiku*, the seventeen-syllable Japanese poetic form originated by the seventeenth-century Zen poet, Basho. To cite one instance he selects,

The sea darkens,  
The voices of the wild ducks  
Are faintly white.<sup>6</sup>

According to the Japanese theologian, Kazoh Kitamori, the esthetic observer attitude pre-eminently heralded in Japanese culture by Basho is the chief hindrance to the Christian mission in Japan. Because it has become the spiritual element in which the Japanese people live, it is the greatest enemy of Japan's evangelization. *Haiku* and Zen are filled with "the pathos of things" (in Japanese, *monono aware*). In an existence in which

<sup>6</sup> Watts, Alan W., "Beat Zen, Square Zen, and Zen," in *Chicago Review*, Summer, 1958, p. 8.

ultimate meaning is anticipated, esthetic pathos is an anesthetic which kills the pathos of the person, the pathos which appears when the ultimate possibility in history seems unrealized. In Japan the esthetic, detached way of life is called *iki*. Christians who live an involved life are felt to be rude and uncouth by comparison. That rudeness is known as *yabo*. As Kitamori says, *iki* people will have nothing to do with Christianity because of its *yabo*-ness.<sup>7</sup>

There are some structural respects in which Zen and Christianity seem a good deal alike. These are usually the respects in which Christianity has a kinship to existentialism. Martin Heidegger is said to have commented after reading a piece by the Zen philosopher, D. T. Suzuki, "This is what I have been trying to say in all my writings." The point of similarity referred to is the Zen, Christian, and existential way of grasping the truth inwardly. Each of these emphases knows that the truth can only be communicated in hints, indirectly. Zen actually has a discipline, the *koan*, contrived to make the grasping of truth in objective categories impossible. According to an American novelist who has flirted with the eastern faiths, J. D. Salinger, "Logic" was in the apple Adam ate. "What you have to do is vomit it up if you want to see things as they are."<sup>8</sup> In his more sedate way Joachim Wach has observed that this passion for inwardness is found nowhere in Western culture except in some modern philosophy "and in Methodism!"

A Methodist or an existentialist could say as the twelfth-century Zen monk Doken did, "When you are hungry or thirsty, my eating of food or drinking does not fill your stomach. You must drink and eat yourself." Or, "borrowed plumage never grows." But it is not true for Christianity as it is for Zen that existence in the truth is an attribute of one's realization of oneself. Zen believes that man must find his salvation within himself or nowhere, therefore the hints in all its communication are contrived to block alliances beyond oneself. Zen's esthetic detachment from the world serves as an opiate which quiets the surmise that on such a basis nothing will have the last word. It is no accident that many of Salinger's heroes confront the perils of their historical existence by dozing off. The device borders closely on what Vedanta knows as *nirvana*, Zen as *satori*, and psychotherapy as neurotic sleep. The Christian gospel, on the other hand,

<sup>7</sup> See pp. 117ff., *Ajiya ni okeru Kirisutokyo* (Christianity in Asia), edited by H. R. Fox and Kano Yamamoto, Tokyo, 1955. James Bissett Pratt in *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism* may have had in mind the *iki-yabo* contradiction when he likened the conversion of a Buddhist to Christianity to making Thomas Aquinas a Methodist.

<sup>8</sup> See his short story, "Teddy," in *The New Yorker*, January, 1953.

speaks to the world in such a way as to evoke a nexus of faith with Jesus Christ, who is the Eternal God's way of being present in history. That presence provides a basis for responsible awareness in history.

#### IV

In its proclamation of God's presence in Christ the Christian gospel has disturbed the world with a restlessness which has often been written off as Western *yabo*-ness. The motivation of the non-Christian mission to America, therefore, is quite unlike the motivation of Christian missions to non-Christian lands. Christians go to non-Christians to proclaim that history can be ultimately meaningful because of Christ. When non-Christians fail to take the hint, possibly it is because it has not occurred to them to require history to be ultimately meaningful. The non-Christian history never remains quite the same, however, for having been exposed to the suggestion.

That fact is evidenced precisely in the non-Christian missions to America. These missions come with the avowed purpose of persuading Christians to abandon the disquieting expectation of ultimacy in history. Salinger's "Teddy" exposes their concern. Teddy is an American boy who believes that in a previous incarnation he was a holy man of India. Due to some misdemeanor in his previous life he was punished, as he believes, by being reincarnated in an American body. For, as he says, "It's very hard to meditate and live a spiritual life in America." A mission to a "Christian" land is a non-Christian culture's alternative to and first line of defense against the Christian mission and against its psychologically perilous by-products, infiltrating the world in the form of Americanism and Western rudeness.

The non-Christian mission will be stubbornly resisted within a Christianly structured history, because of the penchant for the absolute which Christianity has developed here. It will be as stubbornly resisted here as Christianity is in the more relativistic and detached non-Christian cultures. But it may also be more enthusiastically received than Christians would care to concede. The grounds of that enthusiasm cannot be found in any detailed delineation of the comparative similarities and differences between the doctrinal systems of Christianity and the non-Christian religions. It may be found, however, in the fact that the difference is expressible in one name, Jesus Christ. That difference reduces the significance of the similarities to a merely academic level. Jesus Christ has a two-fold meaning for the religious experience of mankind. He is God's call to the world to

take history with absolute seriousness and he is God's sign in history that the invocation has his eternal benediction. Those who hear the invocation without the benediction are either fatigued by the prospect of realizing anything ultimate in history or inflamed by the desire to do so on their own terms.

The whole gospel is not at hand, however, until it is known that in Christ God gives what he commands. That knowledge is the ground of repentance for the rebellious and the resigned alike. That is why there is a thirst on Western soil for what these non-Christian faiths can offer. The thirst can be attributed to the reactions of revolt and resignation which the Christian proclamation has produced among us in the West. The non-Christian religions, which come appealing to the West to surrender the Christian claim to ultimacy, at the same time offer these dissident elements in Christendom an attractive alternative to Christian repentance. They offer it in the form of new possibilities for revolt and resignation, and with the blessing of organized religion. That sweet seduction will not be easy to resist.



## 2. Our Response to the Mission to America

ROBERT LAWSON SLATER

### I

AWAITING A PLANE at an airport in Southern India a few months ago, I entered into conversation with a young Indian scientist. It was a stormy day, the plane was delayed and we had time to become fairly well acquainted. My companion explained that he himself had only recently returned from North America where he had spent four years as a student. He told me that he was a high-caste Hindu, a Brahman, and we discussed at some length the position of the Brahman community in the India of today. Then he mentioned that he had recently been married.

I felt that the conversation had become sufficiently intimate for me to venture the question, "Was it a *'traditional'* marriage?" He knew what I meant. "Yes," he said, "my bride was chosen for me."

Then he proceeded to discuss marriage customs and family life in orthodox India, ruled by caste regulations, in comparison with family life as he had observed it in the West—or rather, the absence of family life. He was neither hostile to the West nor unduly critical. He had made good friends there and found much that was good.

"But it seemed to me," he added, "that your family life is breaking down in the West. That is *not* good. I came back to India even more disposed than before to accept our Indian customs and my own religion."

There are many other students from Asia in our midst who may return home similarly critical in this and other respects, while reports abound of an increasing Oriental opinion in regard to our Western world which is scarcely flattering. We may not like it, and we may marshal many reasons for discounting this criticism; we may see it as largely pertaining to that new pride of indigenous culture, associated with the determination to affirm Asian independence, which is characteristic of Oriental life and thought today.

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We may like it the less when this same estimate takes the form of what is aptly described by the editors of this symposium as "the Mission to America," with the implication that we stand in need of such a Mission. And there is, indeed, with reference to this need, more than implication; there is explicit diagnosis and declared purpose. For such expressions of missionary concern as the Ramakrishna centers which have been established in our midst are representative of a much wider movement of opinion which is becoming increasingly vocal in the Orient today. It is a movement which goes beyond criticism to propose the need for intervention: the modern Western heathen, bowing down to wood and stone, arouses missionary concern. As many in the Orient see the situation, the Western world is enslaved by materialism and the religiously-minded East must come to the rescue, not only for the sake of the West but for the health of the whole world, which is now one world.

Commenting on the significance of the Sixth Great Buddhist Council held three years ago in Rangoon, a Burmese Christian remarked that there was always a special reason for such councils and one reason in the minds of his Buddhist friends was the condition of the modern world; Christianity had failed and Buddhists must take action. Speeches have been made by Buddhist statesmen to the same effect. The resolution passed by the Burmese Parliament pledging support for this same Buddhist Council affirmed that "This Parliament declares its firm belief that it is necessary to devise such measures for the spiritual and moral well-being of man as would help men to overcome greed, hatred and delusion which are at the root of all violence, destruction and conflagration consuming the world." The founding of a new international institute for Buddhistic studies at the time of the Council was announced in terms of this same missionary purpose.

Some of the spokesmen of this purpose say, nevertheless, that they neither expect nor require the Western world to become Buddhist. Observing that "the present is the opportune time to win the West over to the principles of Buddhism," U Chan Htoon, one of the leaders of the World Buddhist Movement, also observed that this did not mean an "attempt to convert the followers of other religions into Buddhists. . . . People may profess any religion they like if they lead the Buddhist way of life." But only by the practice of Buddhist principles could there be peace in the world. This almost amounts to saying that the Buddhist mission is designed to make Christians more Christian.

As to the Ramakrishna mission, a Ramakrishna friend told me that this indeed pertained to his purpose: "I hope by what I am doing to

help others, including my Christian friends, to find more in their own religion."

We should be considerably less than human if we did not squirm in the face of this concern, for we are more accustomed to sending missionaries than to receiving them. But we may be considerably less than Christian if we are not humble enough to learn from it. To see ourselves as others now see us may help us to see ourselves as God may see us.

## II

One good thing at least, then, may result from this encounter with other faiths, and that is a new awareness of some of the implications of our own faith.

We are often quick to remark that this is what has happened in the case of other religions confronted by our own missionary enterprise. In the Orient today, for example, there is evidence of an increasing social concern in the name of religion. Alongside the Christian "social gospel" we now have Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim "social gospels." A case in point is the interesting and significant interpretation of the Buddhist doctrine of Universal Love (*Metta*) by the Venerable U Thittila, an eminent Buddhist scholar who is now on a visit to North America, touring our universities and other centers to explain Buddhist principles. It has often been debated whether this teaching, at least in its Theravada form, is at all comparable with the Christian doctrine of love. The Theravada doctrine, it has been held, means no more than kindly feeling or passive tolerance. U Thittila is emphatic that it means much more than this. He quotes a well-known text which affirms the doctrine in terms of a mother's devoted, self-giving love for her child. The doctrine, he says, is "the basis for social progress . . . the model held up to mankind by the Buddha." And he relates it firmly to fundamental Buddhist principles.

This may be allowed. But a Western writer claims that it is nevertheless a recent development of interpretation and one that has been stimulated by the impact of Christian teaching and example.

For our instruction, we may observe that even when such help or influence seems to the more impartial observer both obvious and beneficent, the more conservative teachers of other faiths are reluctant to admit it. And they are swift to say that anything Christians or others might say on the subject comes very far short of their own previous knowledge and insights. Thus one of the most scholarly and revered teachers of South India, while acknowledging, first, that it is the object of all higher religions

to develop the spirit of love in man, and, secondly, that Hindus need to discern more clearly the implications of their own teaching, suggests that Hindu teaching on this subject is, in fact, "much deeper" than any to be found elsewhere.

Seeing ourselves, then, not in this instance as others see us, but as we may see ourselves in others, we can acknowledge that we are prone to add similar riders. There is the same reluctance to admit that we can learn anything at all, in any way, from other traditions. That we have in fact done so, however, is written large on the page of Christian history. Even those most concerned to keep the Christian faith unspotted from the world of other religions must confess that the Christian, more than once, has "stolen the pagan's honey." He has, some might say, paid the penalty for his theft, for where some see the Christian faith enriched in this way, others only see it adulterated.

The fear that the Faith may again be adulterated by a new commerce with non-Christian teaching is natural in a day which has seen a return to orthodoxy. A good many parish ministers may have a consideration of this sort in mind, and it is the situation of the parish minister which I have primarily in view in writing this article. Confronted by the new interest in non-Christian religions which is exhibited by many members of his congregation today, the minister may feel that his primary duty is to warn them against false prophets. It is, he may believe, part of his pastoral responsibility to see that they do not forsake the Christian Faith for the shallows of syncretism or conclude that one guess in religion is as good as another and no more than a guess. He can pretend no impartiality. As a Christian minister, he must approach the subject in the light of Christian premises, true to his vocation, maintaining a position which is substantially orthodox.

### III

If appeal is made to orthodoxy, however, the question may well arise: which orthodoxy? Or, to put it somewhat differently: allowing regard for Christian premises, what *is* the Christian attitude to other faiths?

The reply must be given that Christian history exhibits more than one attitude associated with the claim that it is orthodox. A modern writer names at least five such attitudes, but they may perhaps be reduced to two, or perhaps three.

There is the position, sometimes named conservative, given challenging emphasis in a modern statement that Christianity came to save us from religion. The Christian message must be sharply distinguished from

any other religious affirmation, and even from its theological interpretation within the Christian religion itself. It is the God-given Biblical message, centered in the Divine Revelation communicated through Christ Jesus our Lord at a particular point in human history and in a particular way. In the light of this same message we can see that the pronouncements of other religions, though associated with sincere aspiration and partial insights, are little more than the vain and often prideful attempts of man to scale the heights of heaven by his own efforts, using his finite, sin-corrupted reason. As Tertullian warned in the second century, we must distinguish between "the disciple of Hellas and the disciple of Heaven."

The second position, generally named liberal, may be said perhaps to place greater emphasis on the content rather than the mode or circumstances of the revelation centered in Christ Jesus. It is seen as a content which affirms a Divine Love for all mankind, shown in creation as well as redemption, a creation which includes man, made in the Divine image and therefore with rational capacity to know and respond to this Love. True, it is only the capacity of finite man, but it is God-given and it is meant to be exercised. Though crippled by sin, it is not destroyed; and the spiritual insights and moral achievements exhibited in non-Christian traditions, as well as the Christian tradition itself, show indeed that it has not been destroyed. Frequently associated with this position is the view that the Christ worshiped by Christians is the Eternal Christ, the Divine Logos, whose light of truth enlightens every man, even when the source of this truth is not recognized. This position, like the first, is also expressed early in Christian history: it is indicated, for example, by Justin Martyr when he observes that philosophers living "according to Logos" may be regarded as Christians in fact if not in name. Applied to non-Christian religions, it is a view which means acknowledgment of the truth and values they affirm and a readiness to learn from them since all truth is of God.

The first position may be described as one which says No to other religions, the second as one which says Yes. Statements of either position, however, are seldom as bald as these summaries might suggest. They are generally qualified on either side, and the qualifications, put together, result in what is virtually a third position, named dialectical, combining both a Yes and a No.

It is thus described and maintained by Dr. Hendrik Kraemer in his two books, *The Christian Message* and *Religion and the Christian Faith*.<sup>1</sup> Kraemer wrote, however, with avowed intent to resist the tide of more liberal

<sup>1</sup> Harper & Brothers, 1938; The Westminster Press, 1958.

thought which had been flowing strongly until the time of the Jerusalem Missionary Conference of 1928; and it is generally considered that his accent on the No is much more emphatic than his accent on the Yes. Writing in the name of Biblical realism, he certainly reflects those more conservative trends of neo-Protestant opinion in our day which discourage any liberal attitude, and it is Kraemer's presentation of this opinion, as sledge-hammer as it is scholarly, which has dominated all recent discussions of the subject. Few if any of his opponents in this particular arena can claim to be his equal (if we except, for different reasons, Professor Hocking and Professor Tillich).

There has, however, just recently appeared, as a volume in the important Library of Constructive Theology, a work which may be regarded as a rejoinder to Kraemer since the author says that the shadow of Kraemer looms over the whole of his book; and it is a rejoinder more worthy of Kraemer's own might. Entitled *The Christian Faith and non-Christian Religions*, it is written by the Cambridge scholar, Dr. A. C. Bouquet.<sup>2</sup> It includes a vigorous restatement of the older interpretation of the New Testament Logos doctrine, an interpretation which Kraemer and others dismiss. The classical interpretation, thus revived, is said to be fundamental to a right Christian attitude to non-Christians who may "have already within themselves encountered the Divine Logos, though perhaps unconsciously." Kraemer is described as "the ablest and most learned opponent of the more liberal attitude" but he is charged with exaggeration, misinterpretation of Scripture, an individualism which leads him to consult only parts of the Bible and not the whole of it, and "an immense stress upon the teaching of St. Paul" which results in putting forward "what seems something perilously like the infallibility of the apostle." As to Dr. Bouquet's own views, they are perhaps sufficiently indicated by the statement in his epilogue:

At some time in the future it might not be improper for believers to exist who called themselves Christian Buddhists, or Christian Confucians, and even perhaps Christian Vedantists or Christian Moslems, without in the least abating their adherence to the Catholic Faith, and while paying a respectful tribute to the religious insights of their forefathers, and to their enlightenment by the One Logos.

No less than Dr. Kraemer, Dr. Bouquet writes as a convinced Christian starting from what he believes to be Christian premises, and one reason for drawing attention to his statement is the fact that it is often supposed

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<sup>2</sup> Harper & Brothers, 1959.



that Dr. Kraemer has said the last word in the name of orthodoxy or the Biblical message and anyone with due regard for either must toe this line in his attitude to other faiths. This is not so. The discussion continues, and the parish minister who looks for guidance from theologians who address themselves to this issue must expect more than one answer.

Hitherto, however, the discussion has been directed with more regard to the problems of the missionary and the indigenous church overseas than the problems of the home town minister. It is therefore of interest that this latest contribution to the subject is written by one who remarks in his introduction that his academic work has been combined with pastoral experience in English parishes for some fifty years.

Discussion of the subject from the standpoint of Christian Missions is closely related to what is sometimes called the problem of communication. How can the difference between Christianity and other faiths be presented in a way which will persuade the non-Christian that he has something yet to learn and stands in need of the knowledge of Christ? Can and should this message be related to what the non-Christian already believes? The Christian is here thinking of *what he has to give*. But if this same discussion is to be relevant to the home-town situation it may need to address itself to a further question: *what the Christian may receive*.

The minister himself, however, may not see the situation in this light. His sense of pastoral responsibility and concern to protect his flock from strange views which may undermine their Christian faith may lead him to think that his situation is similar to that of the missionary: he must above all show that the Christian faith is different. He may see himself primarily in the role of a teacher.

With the laity, however, it is generally otherwise: the role perceived is that of a student. Interest in other religions is often joined with the view that there may be something to learn from them, something which may be of value to personal faith. And why not, it is asked, if the Loving God is active in all the world, which is His world, and all truth is of God? Any objections raised to this proposal may be attributed to the minister's professional interest. There is here, then, some danger of a gulf between the pulpit and the pew, a gulf which may be widened if the minister's references to other religions appear to be ill informed or prejudiced. To the question, What can we learn from these religions? all that the layman sometimes receives is an exposition of the unique character of the Christian revelation which may seem to him involved in a web of theological subtleties. There may be no reference at all to what other faiths actually teach, which may

seem to the layman an obvious requirement. Or, if there is such reference, it may be of a kind which seems to the layman either naive or dishonest.

The term "dishonest" may seem too sharp. But is it not sometimes justified? In a reputable church journal I recently read an imaginative comparison which I have seen and heard elsewhere, given with a view to its quotation, probably from the pulpit. It ran somewhat as follows:

A certain traveller fell into a deep ditch and lay there injured and helpless.

The Buddha came along. He looked at the man and said: "Why are you lying there? Pull yourself together and get out of it."

Mohammed came along. Passing on, he observed: "You must resign yourself to your fate. It is the will of Allah."

Then Jesus came along, and, looking on the man with love and compassion, he stretched out strong arms of mercy, pulled him out of the ditch, healed his wounds and set him on his way.

Now, no one has a right to make such a statement unless he has read enough of the teaching of other faiths to be persuaded that it is true, and a good many laymen today have read enough to believe that it is very far short of the truth. If it is objected that few ministers today have the time or opportunity to attain the knowledge here suggested, one answer is that in such a case, silence is golden. But this is not the only possible answer. There is also the answer that the pastoral situation is such today that time must somehow be made for the reading and study required to deal with it more adequately.

True, it is such a vast subject that even the writers of general surveys of the field are largely dependent on the experts in particular areas while these experts are not all agreed, and many aspects of the subject are still in debate. All this being the case, hesitation is natural. But enough new reading material, sufficiently well-informed, is available today to enable a more adequate approach to the subject than has hitherto been possible. The minister can at least become acquainted with the literature which is arousing the interest of his parishioners. Included in this literature he will find cheap editions of the more important scriptures, useful anthologies and books such as those edited by Professor Morgan<sup>3</sup> in which non-Christians speak for themselves.

There is however, urgent need for something more—need for the kind of discussion and consideration of this new challenge which has been given to the question of Religion and Science.

<sup>3</sup> Morgan, Kenneth W., ed., *The Religion of the Hindus* (1953), *The Path of the Buddha* (1956), *The Straight Path* (Islam) (1958). New York: The Ronald Press Company.

It can be said, I think, that the relation between Religion and Science is no longer the cause of the difficulties and doubts which disturbed an earlier generation. Intelligent Christian apologetic has enabled Christians to come to terms with modern science. In the place of this challenge, however, there is now the new challenge which arises from the growing popular interest in other religions. A similarly intelligent Christian apologetic addressed to this need is therefore urgent.

"Thank God," wrote an English theological professor some years ago, "that we are not bothered with Comparative Religion in this school. We keep to the essentials." He might today see greater cause to thank God that the study of this subject has been given a place in an increasing number of our seminaries; while ministers who have received this instruction, confronted by the new situation in their parishes, may be equally thankful. It may, however, be questioned whether, even so, the approach to the subject is all that is required. Survey courses, aiming at a consideration, as impartial as impossible, of what other faiths stand for and mean to their adherents, are valuable. Indeed, a first approach in this scientific spirit may be regarded as necessary, despite all that is said against it in the name of "existential concern." But, following such an empirical approach, there is a further need for avowed and definite theological interpretation related to the questions which the minister today has to answer, both for himself and in the interests of others.

Such an interpretation will need to move beyond the shallows in which one Credo is merely set against another, if indeed it has not already begun to do so. There is need to consider not only *what* is said in the name of Religion but *how* it is said and *why* it is said. Questions raised by modern psychological and sociological studies are deeply relevant. They may help us to understand better how it is that the saints of different traditions feel at home with each other while, at the same time, they are often constrained to stand by conflicting interpretations. If this enlarges the inquiry, one reward may be a better understanding of our own Christian divisions.

I have perhaps written too largely in terms of problems, challenge and difficulty. As such, indeed, the busy minister of today may see the subject. Another headache! But some have also seen the situation in terms of new opportunity. They have found this new interest stimulating their parishioners to fresh inquiry concerning the essentials of their own faith. They have also found that it provides an avenue of approach to men and women who are not yet fully identified with the life and worship of the church. It has been my privilege recently to speak at a number of meetings

arranged to meet such inquiry, some in small country towns, and I have found the ministers both surprised and gratified by the response to their initiative.

Whether we view it in terms of opportunity or challenge, however, the situation is one which is likely to persist. The Mission to America has come to stay. The fourteen centers of the Ramakrishna Mission may or may not increase, the spate of new books on non-Christian faiths may or may not continue; but what they represent is no short-lived feature of this modern world in which the distant stranger is now our near neighbor and frequent visitor, and in which the distant Hindu of yesterday is now the missionary in our midst or the student who may return home with the word that such missionary concern is needed if our Western world is to retain its vision of the World Invisible.

### 3. *Mutual Irradiation*

DOUGLAS V. STEERE

IT WAS SOMETHING of an experience recently to find every seat taken and students sitting on a table at a Haverford College philosophy club meeting in order to hear a talk on Taoism by a colleague from a neighboring institution. I asked a friend how he accounted for such keen interest. "They are uneasy with what they have and curious to know if some other world outlook has a better way." Whether this remark plumbs the secret motivation of these students or not, this willingness on the part of adherents of different religions to listen to each other with ears that are open is a phenomenon that marks our age.

While Taoism, apart from its profound original influence on what we call Zen Buddhism, is not a major contestant in the present confrontation of the great world religions, there is plausibility about a remark of Arnold Toynbee's that is even greater today than when he made it in his closing Abraham Flexner lecture at Bryn Mawr College ten years ago. He declared that when historians wrote of our century a thousand years from now, they would be far less interested in the little domestic tiffs between Communism and the Western democracies than they would be in what happened to Christianity and to Buddhism when for the first time in history they really interpenetrated each other. He might have included Islam and Hinduism in this prophecy as well. Certainly the revolutionary interpenetration of Western civilization and of Christianity and the other great world religions (which in this article I shall limit to Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam) is now going on at a pace that never before in world history has even been approached.

#### THE GLOBAL INTERPENETRATION OF THE WORLD RELIGIONS

In Kyoto, several years ago, an old retired Zen Buddhist abbot explained to me that there had been a saying that if the Japanese Zen monks meditated intensely enough, they could reach right through the globe

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and shake the West. However in the past decades, the old abbot added ruefully, the West has reached through the globe and shaken not only the East, but Zen itself. The shaking had gone so deep that not only the traditional *Koans* (problems for Zen meditation) but even the system of medieval monastic training may have to be totally recast.

But the shaking is not all in one direction. Never before has the West had the opportunity it has today to secure a sympathetic interpretation of Zen Buddhism. For a long generation, Zen Buddhism has been principally interpreted to English readers by the Japanese scholar, Daisetz Suzuki. Ten years ago, following on the East-West philosophers' conference in Hawaii, this venerable scholar came to New York City to live, and there he has been the center of a considerable circle of interested students of Zen. One of the frequent visitors in this circle is Dr. Condo, a Tokyo psychotherapist, who has found a kinship between Zen principles and those of psychotherapy. Several abbots of Japanese Zen monasteries have made leisurely journeys through this country. And the recent seven-months visit of the brilliant Zen interpreter, Professor S. Hisamatsu of Kyoto, and his secretary-interpreter to the Harvard Divinity School and to the Eastern states has resulted in extended conversations with a number of this country's ablest religious thinkers. On the Pacific coast Alan Watts has been a leading writer and interpreter of Zen to an ever-widening group of persons.

The same story of this mutual shaking could be repeated for Hinduism and Islam. Gandhi's touch with Christian sources both in South Africa and in India are well known. The late Sri Aurobindo, still regarded as India's leading interpreter of Hinduism, spent his early years from seven to twenty-one in England, and from his Pondicherry ashram wrote his shelf of books on Hinduism in English; while India's vice-president, S. Radhakrishnan, spent many years in a chair of Eastern Religions at Oxford. Swami Vivekananda, the institutionalizer of the Hindu Missionary Movement, the Ramakrishna Order, was stirred to many of his social and humanitarian insights through his visits in England and America, and British-Americans like Gerald Heard and Aldous Huxley and Christopher Isherwood all share with a most able corps of Ramakrishna Hindu scholars in interpreting Vedanta to this country. No less a Methodist scholar than the late Edgar Brightman confessed to a theological group one evening that late in his life a Ramakrishna monk had taught him how really to pray.

In Islam, its greatest eastern poet and prophet the late Iqbal, often called the Muslim Tagore, was a disciple of the Cambridge University



philosopher McTaggart, and many of Islam's most impressive Arab devotees are graduates of the American universities of Beirut and Cairo. In America today, no city of any size is without its mosque, and instruction in its religious and cultural treasures is no longer a purely academic matter reserved for the facilities of a few great universities. There must, then, first of all be a frank admission that most searching interpenetration is continually going on in the present world situation.

In this situation of the interpenetration of the world religions, there would seem to me to be three critical issues that confront us which we as Christians cannot evade:

- (1) Are we prepared to be as frank as our fellow world-religionists are about our spiritual problems in the face of the present world situation?
- (2) What attitude are we to take with regard to the relationship of Christianity to the other world religions?
- (3) To what degree is Christianity prepared to be reconstituted by her vulnerable exposure to the other world religions?

#### WHAT RESPONSE TO THEIR CANDOR?

In spite of the appalling variations within Buddhism and Hinduism and Islam, it is not necessary to probe very deeply into any one of these three non-Christian religions today to find their leaders talking of how unready they feel to meet the present situation, and how deeply it searches them. I remember riding back to Calcutta from Belur, the headquarters of the Ramakrishna movement in India, with a Ramakrishna monk who told me how much a victim of active good works their many scholarly and philanthropic enterprises were making them, and he confessed frankly that unless they could get more of their monks into the Himalayas again to pray them through, in a few decades almost certainly they would become a band of extraverts. Deeply concerned Hindus also acknowledged they were losing many of their highly educated youth, and that with universal literacy and the decay of the caste system on the way, the village Hindus would be ever more critical of Hinduism's archaic and unreformed character.

A Buddhist leader in Burma confessed that Burmese Buddhism is socially decadent, that it cannot rise to counter the human greed of the present Buddhist land-owners in order to encourage land reform, and that with its ranks full of rice-centered monks, it faces a deep crisis in the period ahead when Communism is a genuine and urgent alternative. The excess real estate in the hands of Japanese Buddhist authorities speaks for their shrinking capacity to meet Japanese spiritual needs, and its leaders are

frank in confessing their bewilderment. They know that to assist at burial and memorial rites is not enough.

Sir Zaphrilla Khan, when he was the foreign minister of Pakistan, once confessed in the hearing of my students that never in its entire history has Islam been at a lower spiritual ebb than today, and that its use as a political and cultural rallying force must not be allowed to conceal this fact.

As if it were necessary to encourage some similar heart searchings and self-criticism and candor in the Christian West, there might be added a more pointed accusatory passage from the writings of the Boston Art Museum's gentle art historian and philosopher, the late Dr. Coomaraswamy, that speaks of the effect of the West on the East: "Few will deny that at the present day, Western civilization is faced with the imminent possibility of total functional failure, nor that at the same time this civilization has long acted and continues to act as a powerful agent of disorder and oppression throughout the rest of the world."

The Islamic poet-prophet Iqbal echoes the same note as Coomaraswamy in what he interprets as the hypocrisy between ideals and daily life in the Christian West:

Humanity needs three things today: a spiritual interpretation of the universe, a spiritual emancipation of the individual, and basic principles of a universal import directing the evolution of human society on a spiritual basis . . . The idealism of Europe never became a living factor in her life, and the result is a perverted ego seeking itself through mutually intolerant democracies . . . Believe me, Europe is the greatest hindrance in the way of man's ethical development.

And what he said yesterday of Europe, he would, were he living, hardly withhold from America today.

What frankness may such statements by our fellows in the other world religions about their own situation in the face of political movements like Communism, nationalism, and the wave of industrial and highly urbanized secularism, draw from our life as Christians! For when it comes to either the released joy of the abandoned soul or the common frontier of the spiritual transformation of society, the Christian Church in the West is a hard-pressed minority. When the African confesses to the missionary, "We do not yet have the inflammation of the heart," he searches us.

With all of our great religious organizations, our vast donations to Christian charity, our sense of responsibility for justice and decency, how meager among us is the inflammation of the heart! Even as a church, we do not on any large scale dare to challenge the preparations for a nuclear

war, to dissolve away the arterio-sclerosis of race prejudice, or to feel more than the most minute liability for the two-thirds of the world's population who stand in continual need of the most minimal requirements for life and health. In Evelyn Underhill's figure, Christians have garlanded the head of Christ but have found this ever so much easier and more congenial than to care for his feet. When Bernard Clement paraphrases the Johannine account of the resurrection scene to read, "Peace, I am alive, there is work for you to do," how it judges our anxiety of heart!

What boldness in confession, then, will our fellow world religions draw from us by their frankness, especially when it confirms the judgment under which we inwardly stand to the normative love beamed upon us by Jesus Christ?

#### THE CASE FOR MUTUAL IRRADIATION

When it comes to the second issue of the alternative ways in which Christianity may approach the other world religions, these seem to narrow down to four. The first is mutual extermination. The second is syncretism, or blending. The third is coexistence, with no attempt to influence each other. The fourth, and the one I shall attempt to put the case for, is mutual irradiation.

Presupposed in this advocacy of mutual irradiation and the rejection of extermination, syncretism and coexistence is a view of general revelation which asserts that God has not left himself without a witness anywhere in the world. A Quaker friend of mine used to love to tell of a Benedictine abbot who gave a word of counsel to some young monks who were bound for the mission field in the Far East. He told them never to forget that God had been at work on the hearts of these people long before they got there, that he would be at work on them quite apart from their efforts while they were there, and that he would continue his siege of the souls of these people after they had gone. This view would regard the great world religions as profound responses to the divine initiative; and while it does not imply that these responses are all equally adequate, it does maintain that each contains precious facets and accents of the truth that God is pouring out upon human hearts, that are meant to quicken all men.

Apart from a view of general revelation, there are two further premises implicit in this positive advocacy of mutual irradiation. The first of these would accent the way in which the special revelation of God in Jesus Christ is continually being diluted and even falsified by our Western institutional presentations of it. It would show how this special revelation continually

judges the Christian religion, as such, and reconstitutes and renews it by again and again casting off cultural forms that were at one time regarded as indispensable to it. The second of these would affirm that Western Christianity has not even begun to make an exhaustive response to the revelation that was communicated through Jesus.

Friedrich von Hügel, in the opening pages of his *The Mystical Element of Religion*,<sup>1</sup> expressed this second point with great clarity:

A person came and lived and loved, and did and taught, and died and rose again, and lives by His Power and His Spirit forever within us and amongst us, so unspeakably rich, and yet so simple, so sublime, and yet so homely, so divinely above us precisely in being so divinely near—that His character and teaching require, for an ever fuller and yet never complete understanding, the varying study and different experiments and applications, embodiments and unrollings of all the races and civilizations, of all the individual and corporate, the simultaneous and successive experiences of the human race to the end of time.

If these two presuppositions, (1) the judgment which the special revelation of Jesus Christ continually makes of Christianity, and (2) the obvious fact that Christianity has not begun to exhaust the hidden truths that lie in the special revelation of Jesus Christ, are kept clearly before us, there is a setting for the attitude of Christianity to the other world religions that would welcome this profound listening and responding to one another, this mutual irradiation.

If the special revelation of Jesus Christ claims him to be the type man whom the human heart and the unconscious depths of man long for, and if it claims him to have definitely disclosed the utter caring of God and the relentless siege of man's soul by his love, and if this revelation is really trusted, it may speak and be spoken to in the present profound encounter.

In this mutual irradiation of one religion by another, it would seem reasonable to predict that the center which is the absolute one will polarize the others and will lift into itself that which is true in them and reject what is false. If this is the case, it would seem to exclude an attitude of mutual extermination. For if Jesus Christ is the universal center, he will not exterminate but will raise up that which is of God in these other religions, and there is much of God to be found there; and he will judge down that which is degenerate and evil in them, precisely as he is in the constant course of doing inside the Christian religion itself and in your heart and mine. If he is not the absolute, and the opposite happens, then

<sup>1</sup> Second edition, 1923, Vol. I, p. 21.

our faith as Christians has been wrongly placed. This is a risk I am willing to run.

In Christian history there have been periods when the Christian message has felt a security and expectancy that has resulted in a warm, contagious, outgoing life that feared no culture, no alien religion, no strange system of philosophy, but regarded each in turn as a possible conduit through which there could flow the joyous gospel of the accessibility of the Father God whom Christ revealed. Such a Christian message longed to touch every facet of the life of this alien society. It reached even into the inner image of the self of these societies and spoke to what our Jungian friends would refer to as its archetypes, its deepest yearnings that cast up the images in which it clothed its inner life. It sought to bring the whole man, unconscious as well as conscious, to the whole Christ and was ready in trust to sink the naked, vulnerable Christ to the depths of alien cultures and to trust the action of his transforming powers.

A little Polish refugee girl in a Swedish school was asked in 1945 if she felt it would shake her belief in God if she attended the school chapel where another form of worship than her own was practiced. She smiled and shook her head, saying simply, "Oh no, you couldn't take away my God." A Justin Martyr, a Clement of Alexandria or an Origen seemed to have this inner security that led them into a reckless openness to the religious and cultural forms of those among whom they moved, a fearlessness that has often been shocking to Christians who have hugged a rigid orthodoxy. It was as if these interpreters were so sure that no one could take away their Christ that they felt drawn to share him and his universal thrust in a way that left both Christ and themselves most vulnerable, yet most viable, to those they met.

In speaking of this attitude, Evelyn Underhill says in her *Mysticism*:<sup>2</sup>

The chief claim of Christian philosophy on our respect does not lie in its exclusiveness but in its catholicity: in the fact that it finds truth in a hundred different systems, accepts and elucidates Greek, Jewish and Indian thought, fuses them into a coherent theology, and says to speculative thinkers of every time and place "whom ye ignorantly worship, Him I declare unto you."

Today in the powerful continental Protestant re-assertions of Christian orthodoxy, we are living in a period where this utterly fearless universality of Christ has been largely ignored and where the uniqueness of Christ has been emphasized in such an exaggerated fashion as if to scrub Christ free of every Greek, every Roman, every Gothic and every Renaissance element,

<sup>2</sup> pp. 105-6.

to say nothing of the great world religions which are treated as almost diabolical aberrations.

Now for any Christian group which has sought to restrict the interpretation of Christ exclusively to either the Greek or Roman or Gothic or Renaissance formulation, such a protest would have its rightful place even though "reaction" or "correctional" theologies are seldom of lasting worth. But to carry this protest to the point of attempting to protect Christ by placing a screen of uniqueness about him instead of trusting him to draw to himself categories and thought and cultural forms of each of these societies as well as to play freely, understandingly and lovingly upon the Buddhist, the Hindu and the Islamic mind, is to betray a solicitude for his cosmic significance which only too thinly veils a lack of faith in his power.

How much more faith might be stirred by a Christ who was so trusted that he might penetrate to every phase of society, that instead of fearing the alien religions, the secular, the material, the political, the technical and scientific as his mortal enemies, they might be welcomed as a part of his own body which it was his purpose not to abolish but to guide and to control? The catacomb mentality of this overly defensive Christian theology and mood is a far cry from what our world has need of today. The fresh approach to a natural theology to be found in the more recent writing of Karl Barth gives hope for a serious reassessment of this earlier attitude toward world religions. But the net impact of this movement until now has been an almost disastrous neglect of these problems.

#### SYNCRETISM AND COEXISTENCE REJECTED

This openness of mutual irradiation is not, however, to be confused with syncretism. There is from the outset no claim that the world religions are equally adequate human responses to God's initiative, and that they can therefore be freely patched together into some synthetic form of spiritual Esperanto as syncretism or blending suggests. To admit that they will affect each other profoundly in the course of this mutual irradiation is of course inevitable. But it is one thing to attempt to weld together the best features of all religions into some common amalgam and it is quite another to submit to the kind of polarization that has been described above.

Mutual irradiation must also be clearly distinguished from accepting a kind of hygienic coexistence as the objective. Coexistence in terms of mutual respect and of a determined effort on the part of the great world religions to understand one another on the deepest levels, even to the point of acknowledging that in certain respects the world religions are truly allies



on a common beleaguered front, is one matter. I, as a Christian, for example, can and must acknowledge that—weak and trembling as Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam may be before the power of nationalism, of totalitarian Communism, or before the threat of a new-old class of covetous entrepreneurs to capture for themselves the benefits of the technical revolution—it is nevertheless these very world religions which stand as a reminder to over half of the world's population that the material foreground of life is not all, that there is a deeper life that bears up their own and that is accessible to them, and that the Hindu Vinoba Bhaves and the Muslim Iqbals and their occasional Buddhist counterparts stir the public and private consciences to restrain the excesses that violate human dignity. I can also acknowledge the vast wisdom of a constitution which establishes a coexisting secular state in a country like India where Hindus must learn to live with and respect the rights of over forty million Muslims, and ten million Christians, to say nothing of the Sikhs, the Jains, the Parsees and the Buddhists. Coexistence is infinitely to be preferred to a war of extermination.

It is, however, quite another thing to claim that coexistence is peace. For real peace is a condition of vital interaction, and religions with the universal claims of Christianity and Islam and perhaps implicitly even of Buddhism, can never rest at coexistence. They must inevitably interpenetrate each other, and the welcome encouragement of this condition is to be most appropriately found in the attitude of mutual irradiation.

#### RECONSTITUTED CHRISTIANS

This brings us to the final issue: what kind of reconstitution of Christianity as we know it today might we expect to take place if this attitude of mutual irradiation were in wide practice? It is not difficult to find a personal example, if we read Chatur Vedi's and M. Sykes' life of C. F. Andrews. After a brilliant career at Cambridge, Andrews went to India as an Anglican missionary. At this period he was so firm a high Anglican sacramentarian that he rejected any gesture toward taking communion with other Christians who were not Anglicans. The story of his life, as he came to love and be loved by Indians like Tagore and Gandhi and the Christian Sadhu Sundar Singh, is the story of the reconstitution of a Western Christian which unbuckled first the institutional rigor and then the theological armor by which he had assumed that he was protecting Jesus Christ. One thinks of the famous query, "Are you protecting the Lord, or is he protecting you?"

Step by step with this unbuckling, this discarding of the Western garments in which he had clothed Christ, there seemed to grow in Andrews an inner devotion to the vulnerable, unprotected Jesus Christ which a short while before his death could make it perfectly natural for him to write what was almost an autobiography and to entitle it *What I Owe to Christ*.

In this Christian, living his adult life in a Hindu setting and being open to its irradiation, there was to be found, late in his life when I knew him, a quiet eye, an at-homeness in inward prayer that was as natural as breathing, the readiness to travel light as far as external possessions were concerned—"a life so simple that a little suffices"—and a sense of expectancy toward the seat of holiness in another. He seemed to have been willing to sink Christ in the life of India and to trust him to go on working there.

A similar story could be told of the Norwegian Pastor Reichelt's twenty-five year immersion in Chinese Buddhism until its genius of serenity, of sensitiveness to suffering, of inner awareness, and (in the Mahayana forms) its yearning for cosmic caring and support of the individual's quest had given him a fresh orientation to Christ. In the closing years of his life, the little Chinese-style hospice, library and chapel which his Norwegian friends helped him to set up in the rural backyard of Hong Kong was a place where hundreds of Buddhist pilgrims accepted his hospitality and stopped to study and pray and confer with him and where his own experience of Christ could be simply shared. This picture leaves with us a further example of this kind of reconstitution.

In both of these men, the claim of Christ upon the hearts of those they witnessed to seems in no way to have been diminished by the absence of the spiritual arrogance that marks so much of dogmatic Christian communication. In fact, in them and in their willingness to listen and be deeply spoken to by the great world religion in the area where they served the claim of Christ on non-Westerners was made even more transparent. Their capacity to divest Christ of the Western institutional wrappings and hence to enable him to kindle and fulfill the deepest archetypal longings of men and women in these regions, to give them a dynamic norm to stir afresh their responsibility for each other, all speak for the power of a reconstituted Christianity.

#### THE RISK INVOLVED IN VIABILITY

But these personal examples must not conceal or must not minimize the terrible risk that is involved in this kind of approach. How can we

be sure that in the course of this irradiation and reconstitution, the polarizing powers of the other great world religions may not triumph in the end? How can we be sure that Christ, unless he is more dogmatically defended, will not end up as one more Avatar in the Hindu pantheon; as a great Galilean Bodhisattva in the Mahayana Buddhist hierarchy; or as a forerunner, even if a leading forerunner, to the prophet Mohammed? The whole Semitic tradition in which Islam and Christianity stand, and which incidentally so characterizes the mood of much present Christian theology, has a history that has built up a well-founded horror that has become almost an obsession against any such fusion, against idolatry. If there is any weakening of the institutional and theological antibodies in the blood stream against contamination by other gods, disaster may be imminent.

I see no way of getting around this danger. The approach that has been taken here has minimized the institutional aspects of Christianity as well as the cultural husk of Western civilization which contains many precious corporate responses to the God revealed in Jesus Christ. But it has done so because it regards the living, transforming operativeness of God and Christ on the hearts of men as always prior to and more basic than these institutions.

It also regards both the institutional and cultural aspects of Christianity as being capable of drastic change and continual reconstitution without losing the central core of Christ's revelation of God. It is only in the light of an utter reliance on this contemporary transforming operativeness of God and of Jesus Christ, that any such risk as is involved in this approach will commend itself to the Christian community, and that the impulse to security and purification against idolatrous dilution will be sufficiently resisted to dare to welcome this mutual irradiation.

There may well be a time for the purification of a religion from alien admixtures. But there is also a time when those who have themselves felt the release of Christ are called on to "walk gladly over the earth answering to that of God in every man," willing to have the answer as well as the answerer reconstituted in the dialogue that follows. The evidence is convincing to me that in the time in which we live only such a vulnerable Christ is viable.

# The Radicality of Christianity

JAMES M. ROBINSON

## I

THE CENTER OF JESUS' MESSAGE was: Repent, for the kingdom of God is near. The dramatic future coming of the kingdom from heaven has drawn so near that its coming already looms over the present, calling for a radical break with the "present evil aeon" and an equally radical commitment to God's coming kingdom. Jesus pronounces divine judgment and grants divine blessing, he casts out demons and offers the last chance of repentance, on the basis of the nearness of the kingdom.

Yet the reality of this message does not stand or fall with the apocalyptic thought patterns in which it is stated. For the "present evil aeon" is merely a mythological way of talking about man's basic dilemma: Man finds himself within an intransigent power structure, with his own livelihood threatened by the efforts of his neighbor to get ahead, and thus he himself is inevitably drawn into the struggle for existence. His efforts to keep creeping death at arm's reach, his struggle with his fate, involves him in fault, and he becomes his neighbor's fate. Thus the vicious circle is closed, and the lock is man's unremitting self-assertion, which is all the more remorseless precisely because it is the perverted expression of his longing for transcendence.

To mankind thus caught in the vortex of its basic dilemma Jesus proclaims the end of fate and its replacement with a new context of existence, the kingdom of God, to which man may transcend by means of paradox: In accepting one's death, one is freed from the power of death ruining one's life. It is in suffering that glory resides. It is in humiliation that one finds one's honor. It is in suspending one's self-assertion so as to hearken to the need of one's neighbor (i.e. in love), that one finds one's own deepest need met. In submitting to God's judgment upon the "present evil aeon" of which one is part, one receives forgiveness, new being, transcendence. This radical solution of man's quest for meaningful existence echoes through Jesus' sayings, and cannot fail to shake even the most blasé. We

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hear it already in the beatitudes and woes, where the outsiders are proclaimed insiders and the insiders outsiders:

Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.  
 Blessed are you that hunger now, for you shall be satisfied.  
 Blessed are you that weep now, for you shall laugh. . . .  
 But woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation.  
 Woe to you that are full now, for you shall hunger.  
 Woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. . . .  
 The tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God, but not you.<sup>1</sup>

The very ruggedness of Jesus' solution to the human dilemma exerted a strange force upon those who heard him. Just as in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* the penetrating eye of the rugged old sailor lays hold of the wedding guest and "compels" him to listen, the call of Jesus lays hold of Peter and Andrew at their fishing, James and John mending their nets; and—with an absence of all explanation obviously intended in the narrative—the first disciples are simply pulled up from one existence and transplanted into another. Nor does Jesus permit this to take place as easy, unreflecting enthusiasm, but compels the eager candidate into the issue for which he stands:

I will follow you wherever you go. . . . Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head.

Lord, let me first go and bury my father. Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.

I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home. . . . No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.

Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.<sup>2</sup>

Lest anyone miss the ruggedness of the solution involved in becoming a disciple, language occurs which by its very crudeness cannot fail to shock us:

If your hand (foot; eye) causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands (feet; eyes) to be thrown into Gehenna.

If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

<sup>1</sup> Luke 6:20f., 24f., Mt. 21:31. Unless otherwise stated, quotations are from the Revised Standard Version. In Mt. 21:31, the RSV reads "before you" rather than "but not you." The latter translation was advocated by Joachim Jeremias (*The Parables of Jesus*, p. 100, n. 53) as the meaning of the idiom in Rabbinic usage. W. G. Kümmel (*Promise and Fulfillment*, p. 78, n. 198) argued to the contrary that documentation for this meaning had not been given, whereupon in the 4th German edition of 1956 (*Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, p. 109, n. 6), Jeremias provides the Rabbinic parallels, where the "exclusive" rather than the "temporal" meaning is quite clear.

<sup>2</sup> Luke 9:57ff., Mt. 7:13f.

For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life will find it.<sup>3</sup>

Obviously the basic problem posed by Jesus is not his apocalyptic thought patterns, but rather the radicality of the solution to the human dilemma which he proposed. For the paradox of life in death, self-realization in self-abnegation, transcendence in finitude, comes always as a shock. In fact it is the offense of the cross. For Jesus practised what he preached, he was in his own existence the reality his message offered, so that primitive Christianity's "kerygma" of his death and resurrection was merely a new formulation of the central thrust of his message. Hence his radical solution of the human dilemma was the essence of primitive Christianity.

## II

New Testament scholarship during the past half-century has increasingly rediscovered this central thrust of primitive Christianity, and contemporary theology has provided modern formulations for communicating this paradoxical solution to the human dilemma.

Rudolf Otto subjected the basic religious sensitivity, the awareness of the holy, to careful analysis. He pointed out that the awareness of the holy is not simply the call of the conscience to do good, but is in essence a "numinous" awareness, an awe-inspiring intuition of the transcendent. Now this numinous awareness is two-sided. On the one hand, it is terrifying, leaving the worshiper in sackcloth and ashes: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!" (Isa. 6:5) On the other hand, there is fascination about the "numen" such as often inheres in the weird. Though awe-struck, one cannot help but be attracted, just as the wedding guest is held by the awesomeness of the ancient mariner. One both draws back and draws near. For if the presence of transcendence destroys my worldly life, it also gives me access to higher life, for which I long. Hence it is in the judgment of the divine presence that I find the grace of transcending my own limitation.

The rediscovery of primitive Christianity's paradoxical solution of the human dilemma is also reflected in the theological movement stemming from Karl Barth. His point of departure is Paul and Luther's "justification by faith alone," where God's action is judgment upon man's pride in his

<sup>3</sup> Mark 9:43-47; Luke 14:26; Mt. 16:25 par. The last saying seems to have lacked originally the addition "for my sake and the gospel's" found in Mark 8:35, for Mt. 16:25 and Luke 9:24 have only "for my sake," and Luke 17:33, John 12:25 lack the whole phrase, which F. C. Burney (*The Poetry of Our Lord*, 1925, p. 85) omits as disturbing the poetic structure of Jesus' saying, and which R. Bultmann (*Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, 3rd edition, 1957, p. 97) omits as a later insertion by the church into the tradition for dogmatic purposes.



own moral achievement, coupled with the gift of the righteousness prerequisite to communion with God. This meant for Barth that the customary interpretation of religion as the expression of a human faculty ("religious a priori"; "image of God") has in it the same danger as Judaism's religion of law: it places man's trust in himself, and leads ultimately to self-righteousness rather than to transcendence. God is not "given" in human nature or history, at our disposal to examine and use. Rather God gives himself to us in encounter, where we are called upon to go beyond ourselves in order to come to ourselves, i.e. where our avenue to higher life comes to us from outside our selves and our control, from the action of God in the preaching of the gospel and in the call of our neighbor.

Nor are our history and our culture to be interpreted as the progressive self-revelation of God and the evolving realization of the kingdom of God, for such an interpretation could lead to such self-assertion as Germany's aggressive ambitions on the basis of the slogan "*Gott mit uns*." Rather our nation and culture are cast into the shadow of judgment when confronted with the brilliance of the transcendent kingdom of God to which we are committed. From this confrontation of our culture with God's transcendent kingdom results the radicality of the Christian's relation to his society.

Categories of modern existentialism have also been used to give expression to primitive Christianity's paradoxical solution to man's dilemma. Selfhood is historical, constituted by a continuing act in which one gives oneself to a "world." Primitive Christianity's experience of fate as producing a selfhood dependent upon the "present evil aeon," a perversion of true creation, finds its analogy in modern man's estrangement, separated from the ground of being by the mechanized, impersonalized world of today, from which results the inauthenticity of his existence. Hence primitive Christianity's message of a release from fate, a rediscovery of true creation, a new access to God's transcendent kingdom, makes it possible to bring to an end a selfhood dependent upon the estranged world, and to constitute a new selfhood which lives from the reality of God's new creation. Out of the shaking of the foundations, new being may emerge. The New Testament concept of a "new creation in Christ Jesus" provides existentialistic thought of today with a new concept of authentic existence.

### III

In such theological movements of our day one still hears the echo of primitive Christianity's radical solution to the human dilemma, that in death resides life; in judgment, grace; in suffering, glory; in humiliation,

honor; in self-abnegation, self-realization. But we must not only think, but also live; and just as Christian theology must be a lived theology, the Christian life must be thought-through living.

Jesus' solution of the human dilemma was radical, and this radicality must continue to characterize Christian living. We need not try to think like Jewish apocalypticists. We should not express the Christian radicality within our industrial civilization with the same means used to express it within the agrarian culture of first-century Palestine. We need not be literalists, or even imagine Jesus meant literally to amputate an arm or leg or eye. We need not display our piety by dramatic oddity or a satisfaction in being queer. Jesus was not silly, and we need not be. But he was radical in his solution to man's dilemma: He closed once for all the front door of self-assertion and revealed the hidden door of self-denial, service, selfless love, as God's gift of hitherto unattained transcendence.

This radical solution may not be dodged in favor of a bourgeois respectability called "Christian." At the well-springs of our outward action there must live the radical reality of life in death, if we are not to change Christianity into precisely the same kind of self-satisfied religiosity which did away with Jesus. The outward manifestation of inner radicality will vary from instance to instance, person to person, situation to situation. One's inner radicality may be quite undramatic on the outside, may not produce inevitably a flag-waving radical. Yet it cannot be completely spiritualized away, for it is a radicality at the root of action. One's actual existence will necessarily involve a certain ruggedness, of which one must again and again be reminded:

Already you are filled! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you! For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are ill-clad and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become, and are now, as the refuse of the world, the offscouring of all things.

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. 4:8-13; 2 Cor. 3:8-12.

Some such ruggedness is the inevitable expression of the radicality of the Christian solution.

Jesus proclaimed a solution to the individual's dilemma in the context of a universal message proclaiming God's victory over fate itself, and thus the ultimate resolution of the human dilemma as such, in which even nature and the whole creation are involved. Although we can no longer conceive of this in apocalyptic images, we cannot give up the basic commitment to the future of the *world* involved in our personal deliverance from fate. For it is the very content of Jesus' solution that we find our freedom in service, in forgetting ourselves and living only for the consummation of God's kingdom, when his will will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The great appeal of Communism lies precisely in the fact that it is concerned with the outcome of this world, and proclaims the coming of an *ideal* world. Communism is materialism, to be sure. Yet it is a *dialectic* materialism, a meaningful movement out of which arises an ideal society. The Communist finds the meaning of his existence in terms of this ideal future in which he really believes. It is this idealism in its materialism which gives Communism its power, and it is precisely this hope for the world which Communism has borrowed from Christianity. We cannot accept Jesus' apocalyptic symbols literally, but anti-Christian eschatological symbols show us that we need to maintain the world-relatedness of the Christian hope.

When a Southern governor proclaimed that blood would flow in the streets if racial integration were to come, he was proclaiming an anti-Christian eschatology as to the outcome of the world. The Christian cannot meet such a situation with spiritual fluff, but must reply just as stoutly: Before the school children of today graduate from the public schools in the South, they will have studied with Negro children in their classrooms.

This is not to say that the Christian is to be naive, unaware of how deeply prejudice is imbedded and how likely bloodshed actually is. Rather the cold realism of Christian responsibility requires that we remove the final victory of evil from the horizon of our existence, and place there instead the kingdom of God. For it is in terms of the horizon of one's existence that one's present action and selfhood are determined. The governor was not really concerned with what may happen a decade from now, when his term of office would be long since past. His ugly words about the future were a symbol of the world to which he is committed in the present, and thus of his self constituted by that commitment. Likewise, Christian selfhood arises from commitment to a "world," God's kingdom,

and the Christian act consists in giving oneself for that "world" in each encounter with one's neighbor.

This constant giving of oneself to God's kingdom in each Christian act means that we must, like Jesus, live out of the future. In a world clutching its sacred past, Jesus opened himself to the coming God. He gave up what he was, to be free for what he might be. And he was put to death by those whose vested interest in the status quo robbed them of their openness to the coming God. Our culture today is characterized by a similar flight to security. We are the "found generation." Rather than being committed to a brave new world, we don't want to rock the boat. What is this other than doctrinaire conservatism? By "doctrinaire conservatism" I mean the assumption that the will of God consists in conserving. What can we conserve except the past?

It is the almost inevitable temptation of a religious culture with a glorious past to deify the past, rather than realizing that God has always entered history to explode it, by throwing up against it an ideal which places it under judgment. The progress or betterment within history which results from this divine intervention should not become a vested interest, for one must constantly recall the explosion, the judgment upon the past, through which that betterment came. The God in history is always the God of the future, whose ideal judged the past to make possible a better present, and who continues to stand over the present in judgment, beckoning on into the future where alone God's ideal world resides. Hence the church can never fall into doctrinaire conservatism without returning to the religious complacency at ease in Zion against which Jesus' whole existence was hurled and which was once for all condemned when it killed Jesus.

The kingdom of God always stands before us, judging the power structure of society, beckoning us to move out into God's future. It is only as we move out beyond ourselves that we enter into the presence of God. This is Jesus' radical solution of man's dilemma, and this should be the radicality of Christianity today.

# Theology and the Anti-Metaphysical Spirit

MACK B. STOKES

ALBERT EINSTEIN once said that the fear of metaphysics is a "malady of contemporary empiricistic philosophizing."<sup>1</sup> It is a fear characteristic of the times which has manifested itself conspicuously in both the philosophy and theology of the twentieth century. The anti-metaphysical spirit has come to expression in the most diverse modes of thought. It has produced some strange bedfellows. The most outspoken intellectual movements in the world today which reflect this basic fear or suspicion of metaphysics are: Logical positivism in philosophy, neo-orthodoxy in theology, and existentialism in varied types of literature. Before devoting further attention to these, we require first to define metaphysics and the anti-metaphysical spirit. We shall then proceed to analyze what is back of the current fear or suspicion of metaphysics and follow that with an attempt to give some indication of the role of metaphysics in the development of a total Christian theology.

## I

Metaphysics is that intellectual discipline which seeks to identify and understand, as far as possible, what is ultimate and eternal in relation to what is contingent and temporal. It attempts to show by rational argument that the things and processes in this ordered universe—or in any conceivable ordered universe—are to be thought of as finally dependent upon a Being that is not itself dependent upon anything other than itself. Metaphysics is the persistent quest for ultimate explanation and for comprehensive orientation.<sup>2</sup> This is not to say that the metaphysician is so arrogant as to suppose that he can attain any knowledge that is complete. It is rather to urge that he seeks those principles of sufficient explanation in which alone

<sup>1</sup> Einstein, Albert, in *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, ed. P. Schilpp (Evanston, Illinois: Library of Living Philosophers), p. 289.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Brightman, Edgar S., *Person and Reality*, Ronald Press, 1958, p. 3.

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the mind of man can come to rest. His work is never completed, but he does not require to go beyond a principle of explanation which is ultimate.

Even though the metaphysician is profoundly concerned to identify the interrelationships among the various sciences and among all intellectual disciplines, his work is not that of offering a kind of synthesis of all knowledge. He is to be identified by the one presiding purpose of his reflections. And that purpose is to satisfy the quest for a kind of explanation of the facts of experience which can satisfy the persistent and judicious mind. This involves the stubborn refusal to stop thinking until an intellectually adequate and satisfying principle of explanation of the kinds of data found in the total range of human experience has been identified.

In contrast to this work of the metaphysician, the anti-metaphysical spirit denies either the validity or the relevance of such intellectual efforts. It says that metaphysical theories are untrue, or out of harmony with the Biblical directives, or irrelevant to life and to vital religion. From very different reasons or causes, then, those who embody the anti-metaphysical spirit of our time unite in seeking to minimize or even to put a stop to man's quest for an ultimate principle of explanation and for an identification of what is ultimate and eternal in relation to all else.

## II

The logical positivists,<sup>3</sup> for example, insist that metaphysical statements may be poetically valuable but they are meaningless because they cannot be verified in terms of sense data or in terms of elemental sentences having to do with sense data. Thus, even before the conversation gets under way, they determine how we must proceed. From the start they set up their own rules governing what can be meaningfully talked about. If a sentence purporting to deal in actuality cannot be translated in such a way that it can be verified with reference to sense data, it simply has no genuine meaning and is therefore to be identified as "nonsensical." The logical positivists, however, do not deny that metaphysical systems of thought have a certain value as expressions of poetic imagination. They deny that they have any assignable factual meaning. Logical positivism is

<sup>3</sup> For statements representing logical positivism, see especially: A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, London: V. Gollancz, 1956. R. Carnap, *Philosophy and Logical Syntax*, London: Kegan Paul, 1935. H. Feigl and W. Sellars, ed., *Readings in Philosophical Analysis*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949. Antony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre, eds., *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, London: S.C.M. Press, 1955. L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Harcourt, Brace, 1933.

For a general statement on this movement, see F. C. Copleston, *Contemporary Philosophy: Studies of Logical Positivism and Existentialism*, Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1956; and V. Kraft, *The Vienna Circle*, tr. A. Pap, Philosophical Library, 1953.



a pause in philosophy that is needed for sharpening the pencil, a moment for sharpening some of the tools of reflection.

From an entirely different quarter, Karl Barth represents a kind of philosophical skepticism which is in its way equally extreme. He denies that there is any access through metaphysics to a genuine understanding of the one true God. In confronting modern man with his Biblical theology, one of his great objectives seems to be that of stripping the human mind of any prerogatives in the matter of understanding God. He wants the Word of God to speak directly through the pages of the Bible. In complete contrast to the radical agnosticism of the logical positivists, he affirms the reality of God. But the sole ground of authority for this affirmation, as well as for all other affirmations pertaining to God, is the Bible. Metaphysics, he says, is alien to the directives of the Bible and to the spirit of the Reformation.<sup>4</sup> The God of the metaphysicians is not the God of the Bible. In this way the metaphysical speculations of the philosophers are pushed aside both as contrary to the Bible and as irrelevant to man's needs. Barth seeks to meet the challenge of the modern scientific and cultural situation by stressing the uniqueness of the revelation of God in the Bible and, at the same time, by emphasizing the complete irrelevance to that revelation of man's reflections and experiences.

Most existentialists argue against metaphysics from still another point of view. They start, not with statements about sense data, as the logical positivists do, and not with the Bible, as Barth does, but with man's existential situation. The burden of their thought is not so much to deny the validity of metaphysical systems as to discount their relevance. The spirit of the metaphysician, they say, is that of cold calculation and reason. But it ignores man's desperate situation before the facts of anxiety, estrangement, despair, and death. Therefore it is a remote discipline which, like a monastery, remains aloof from the struggles and issues of man's actual situation. Moreover, metaphysical systems are incapable of communicating the urgency of man's need in such a way as to disclose to him what he must do.

Instead of and beyond metaphysics, therefore, the existentialists set up certain modes of thought, which show man the predicament in which he actually and necessarily lives whether he is aware of it or not. This

<sup>4</sup> Barth, K., *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, tr. G. T. Thomson, Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1936, pp. ix-x.

For a significant comparison of Barth and Eric Przywara on the *analogia entis*, see Niels Nielsen, Jr., "Roman Catholic Magisterium and the Analogy of Being," in *The Lutheran Quarterly*, VIII (August, 1956), pp. 3-14. See also John E. Smith, "The Present Status of Natural Theology," *Journal of Philosophy*, LV (October 23, 1958), p. 925.

accounts for their interest in myth and drama and poetry as the profounder instruments of communication and arousal. The existentialists insist that no system of beliefs can answer those needs of man which arise from actual personal involvements. Systems of thought are lifeless and therefore cannot gather up into themselves the seething struggles of personal history. They are like nets that "catch up the air" while the fish fall through their oversized holes. The passion of the genuine existentialist, then, is not to present arguments which make sense to the judicious mind, but to stir up responses which will cause man to seek in living decisions and encounters the answers to his questions.

We are to look away from metaphysics and toward life itself in order to grapple with those issues which are "living, forced and momentous."<sup>5</sup> The existentialists seek the answers primarily in some form of total personal involvement. Man finds the truth about his existence or about his relationship to God and the universe, not from intellectual reflections and calculations, but through his total involvement in life. He partly creates the truth as he goes along; for it is a living thing.

In interpreting the Bible, the Christian existentialist tends to view it as revealing to man his own plight and as providing the one message of deliverance in the call to decision and faith. The Bible is not a book from which a set of affirmations is to be drawn; it is a book calling upon man to enter the deeper dimensions of living and to struggle, to decide, to affirm his way to God. Man thus so participates in the processes of total involvement as to make real and true the belief in God and in the divine love. No other approach is needed or useful. Metaphysics is thus a useless effort except for some possible poetic benefits. Even if true, it remains largely irrelevant.

### III

It is a matter of curiosity to understand how man's persistent interest in metaphysics as seen in the reflections of such great thinkers as Plato and Aristotle, Anselm and Aquinas, Spinoza and Leibniz, and Hegel and Royce could have been laid aside with a boldness that almost amounts to arrogance. There must be some explanation for this. We shall first attempt to indicate briefly the major factors that have contributed to the resurgence of the anti-metaphysical spirit in philosophical and theological thought today. Then we shall attempt to show that no Christian theology can hope to be full-orbed without employing the mind in reflections which are inescapably metaphysical in nature.

<sup>5</sup> James, William, *Essays on Faith and Morals*, Longmans, Green, 1943, p. 34.

We may dispose of some non-intellectual factors which lend support to the anti-metaphysical spirit by barely mentioning them. One of these is intellectual laziness. Nothing is more difficult than to think. And to think persistently, resourcefully, and judiciously about what is ultimate and eternal in relation to the passing flux of things is one of the most rugged of all human tasks. In the nature of the case, only a relatively few people are called upon to enter this dimension of reflection, even though multitudes may understand and benefit from the conclusions drawn. It is easy and natural, therefore, to seek intellectual shortcuts and substitutes for the momentous and awesome task of metaphysical reflection. The anti-metaphysical spirit, therefore, has an initial advantage in that, in attempting to minimize the persistent and resourceful work of the metaphysicians, it strikes against one of the most perplexing and formidable enterprises of the human spirit. Man is quite ready to forego metaphysics in any case because of the difficulties that are involved. And the anti-metaphysical spirit can always gain considerable momentum from its opposition to what man is already disposed to eschew.

Beyond this, there is a deep-seated suspicion of metaphysical reflections which arises from the passion to give full expression to the claims of feeling. It is often supposed, consciously or unconsciously, that profound intellectual reflection stifles feeling. The recurring modes of romanticism reveal the significance of this factor. The "reasons" of the heart are not to be minimized; indeed, they are to be given priority over the arguments presented by the intellect. Metaphysical reflections leave man cold.

Similarly, they do not properly guide him in his decisions nor do they enable him to encounter the ultimate reality of which they speak. Even if true, therefore, they are more or less irrelevant. Decisions have to be made; the encounter with God is necessary; and yet the metaphysician goes about his business like one lecturing on navigation while the ship is sinking.

More significant than any of these attacks upon metaphysics is the one which comes from a loss of confidence in its validity. For the modern mind, Hume laid the foundation for this skepticism and Kant built the superstructure. Hume's whole point, in this connection, was to show that there is no way of moving from human beliefs to objective realities by means of purely formal deductions. Briefly stated, Hume insisted that propositions may imply another proposition, but no fact deductively *implies* any other fact, no event *implies* any other event, and no experience *implies*

any fact beyond itself. An acorn does not deductively imply an oak tree. The moon does not imply the stars. A perception of the ocean does not imply the existence of the ocean. Present experience does not deductively imply past experience. In short, we cannot syllogistically deduce any of the latter from the former.<sup>6</sup>

Hume made it impossible to claim for metaphysical reflections the warrant of absolute certainty. He urged that all we can do even in affirming the most elemental facts about the world around us is to be content not with complete proof but with social habits and customs. As long as everyone agrees that trees, sidewalks, and houses exist, we are safe in following this general habit of belief even though there is no logical or rational basis for it.

Kant was awakened out of his dogmatic slumbers by this and began to develop his critical philosophy which, on its purely intellectual side, is inherently skeptical. The pure reason has to do only with the phenomenal world which appears to man. The world as it is in itself cannot be known. It is a *Ding an sich*. If God is, he too is a *Ding an sich* from the standpoint of man's pure reason. The traditional proofs for the belief in the existence of God are inconclusive and therefore to be laid aside. The traditional questions of metaphysics cannot be decisively answered in one way or another. The formula for repudiating metaphysics, then, might be this: Since absolute or mathematical proof is unattainable in metaphysics, the whole discipline, as traditionally conceived, lacks the rational basis which it claimed for itself. It is therefore to be avoided as an intellectually unwarranted enterprise. This led Kant and many of his followers to seek other ways of grounding man's beliefs concerning ultimate reality. Kant found in the "practical reason"—which has to do with man's emotional and volitional requirements—what he could not find in man's intellect. The mind is so constituted in its moral and practical nature as to require the belief in God, freedom and immortality. And Kant developed this so as to make it the outcome of an essentially rational process.

The logical positivists accepted Hume's analysis at face value and did not care to go with Kant into any other dimension of experience to show the validity and relevance of metaphysics.

Barth accepted the skepticism of Kant and by-passed his efforts to secure religious beliefs by means of the practical reason. He insisted that there is nothing in man's reason, whether formal or practical, which can

<sup>6</sup> Hume, David, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section 4, Part 1; Section 7, Parts 1-2.

give him the slightest insight into the nature and actions of God. Barth even repudiated Schleiermacher's principle of the religious consciousness as a basis for theological affirmation. There is no road from man's thought or experience to God. Barth therefore moved from Kantian skepticism into his thoroughgoing separation of the human from the divine, of man from God. And metaphysics was pushed aside *in toto* as hopeless from the standpoint of Christian theology. Here only the unique supernaturally expressed Word of God can show the way amid all the wreckage of the metaphysical systems. But Barth, following the directives of the Bible, has developed schemes of thought which, though metaphysical in character, repudiate metaphysics by discounting rational arguments or foundations for theological constructions. His schemes of thought are, therefore, systematic expositions of the affirmations involved in the Word of the Living God which is given only in and through the Bible.

The existentialists are, for the most part, basically skeptical of both the validity and the usefulness of metaphysics. In this Heidegger and Tillich would be exceptions. There is nothing about existentialism that requires it to repudiate the *validity* of metaphysics. Its great burden is to show that metaphysics is *irrelevant* to life and that a new and living approach to ultimate questions is called for. What have Hegel's *Logic* and Whitehead's *Process and Reality* to do with life? For the existentialists, then, the big point is that metaphysics is a waste of time and a threat to the vital solutions of the problems having to do with the ultimate issues of life. The existentialists join Kant in seizing upon man's practical demands. But instead of fixing attention chiefly upon the moral nature, as Kant did, they stress man's total involvement—or his existential situation. Out of the inner struggles of the self with the issues of life and death and destiny, man is to find his way toward a system of living relationships in which his being can thrive.

This view bears striking similarities to the pragmatism of William James, and especially to his essay on the "Will to Believe." But the existentialists tend to stress the *total* involvement of the person rather than merely the "will" to believe. There is, nevertheless, a basic kinship here in that both James and the existentialists give priority to the demands of the living striving self rather than to the rational processes of the judicious mind. Both are quite ready to by-pass or even trample upon the requirements of reason in the interest of the demands of personal existence. In this way, the existentialistic intellectual seeks to answer questions by intro-

ducing irrational or nonrational procedures. Existentialist modes of thought, then, become infected with an incurable subjectivism.<sup>7</sup>

#### IV

We are now prepared to consider in some detail the inherent relationship between metaphysics and Christian theology. It shall be our purpose to show that the tendency in the history of Western thought to bring the speculations of the philosophers and the affirmations of the Church into a common forum of conversation and debate is a tendency that is in keeping both with the requirements of Christian thought and also with the demands of reality. Christian theology, in some of its aspects, is greatly enriched and strengthened by the work of the metaphysician.

Before elaborating upon this general thesis, we require to delineate more precisely the issue before us so that we may identify what is and what is not the question. In reference to the logical positivist, we are not doubting that many aspects of reality are understood by reference to sense data; nor are we denying that clarity of meaning has an important place in all intellectual discourse. The point is that there are other legitimate data than sense data, and that there are other and profounder approaches to reality than that proposed by the logical positivists on which intellectual affirmations of supreme significance may be made.

In regard to Barth, we are not questioning the final authority, in its dimension, of the Bible. Nor are we urging that the directives of the Bible are to be altered or tampered with by metaphysical reflections. We are affirming, however, that the Bible itself states and implies a total metaphysical perspective which, with great profit, can be brought into the forum of philosophical debate. And the Christian mind is at a distinct advantage for entering into this debate.

In reference to the existentialists, we are not questioning the importance of the crucial problems and struggles of life. These are basic. We are simply denying that intellectual questions—such as those having to do with man's beliefs concerning the existence and nature of God, concerning God and the physical universe, and concerning God and human history—can be answered by either nonintellectual processes or by a mixture of rational with nonrational processes. As a program of evangelism of one sort or another, existentialism has a profound contribution to make. As

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Princeton University Press, 1945, pp. 169-224. See also David E. Roberts, *Existentialism and Religious Belief*, Oxford University Press, 1957, pp. 51, 94, 166, 202, 225, 230, 232, 252, 258-9, 341.



a mood it may commend itself. But as a movement seeking to by-pass metaphysics, it is a hopeless failure. Intellectual questions are either intellectually answered or they are not answered at all. No man, by *deciding*, can either validate or invalidate the belief in God. He may, by a kind of "will to believe," disclose the depths of his convictions. Moreover, man's experience in total involvement may be used by the judicious mind as a datum for sound belief, but taken by itself alone total involvement establishes nothing. In a universe without God, man's religious involvement would be an involvement in fantasy. Therefore, the prior question has to do with the soundness of the belief in God. We are sympathetic here with the profound concern on the part of the existentialists with the problem of squaring up to the desperateness of man's plight. But this existentialist approach serves quite a different function from that of the metaphysician. The two, when rightly understood, are no more in conflict than are psychology and life. Both are important.

The point is that reason must have the right of way in the affairs that pertain to it. The will is irrelevant to intellectual tasks except for its momentous function in setting the mind going in the search for truth. The passions validate nothing. They have their unique role in life; they are facts to be used by the judicious mind in its efforts to interpret all of the data of experience. But man can never allow them to usurp the function of reason without suffering the disaster of subjectivism.

Finally, we are not here insisting that everyone must be a trained metaphysician in order to enter into the living relationships with God which are mankind's highest privilege. No man needs to await the conclusions of the next metaphysician before putting his trust in God. But it is important to know that the greatest philosophical minds have, for the most part, affirmed the reality of God. Metaphysics has a past as well as a present. And that past is of such a character as to lend encouragement to all who would make ventures into a living faith.

## V

Now that the issue is clearly before us, we may ask the question, on what grounds do we assert that metaphysical reflections have significant contributions to make to Christian Theology?

First, these reflections have offered genuine and significant insights into the Being of God and his relationships to the created orders. This presupposes that the mind of man can, without special revelation, come to some understanding of the nature of God. But are we warranted in asserting

this in view of Hume's devastating argument referred to in a foregoing paragraph? The answer is that we are. There is nothing about Hume's position that necessarily involves skepticism. It only implies skepticism if the criterion of truth is absolute formal certainty. Hume thought his analysis required skepticism and that therefore we were left with no *rational* basis for believing in the existence of things in the world around us. And this would apply to the belief in God as well. In his fundamental analysis, he had a profound insight, but he erred in not recognizing that his conclusion, far from requiring a nonrational basis for the obviously sound beliefs about the world around us, called for a different understanding of rational processes. Anyone in his right mind knows that his considered judgments about cause and effect, for example, must have some kind of genuinely rational basis even though they may not be proven with mathematical certainty. Hume saw the failure of deductivism in matters pertaining to man's beliefs about the actual processes in the external world. But he failed to hear the call for a different and profounder understanding of the nature of rationality relative to beliefs concerning existing things and processes.

The thought here is that even though we may join Hume and Kant in asserting that there is no argument or network of arguments for the belief in God which can establish that belief with mathematical certainty, we may go beyond both Hume and Kant by affirming that the mind may nevertheless believe in God on perfectly rational grounds. The mind is believing rationally when it affirms on the basis of a careful study of the relevant facts. And there is no surer indication of the presence of rational processes than that of the mind sincerely considering all of the kinds of evidence relevant to a belief. This means that a different conception of the nature of rational foundations from that of deductivism is required. If we think of rational foundations in terms of the judicious mind at work basing its conclusions upon the evidence and carefully considering alternative possibilities, then we may plunge into the sphere of metaphysics and develop systems of reflection about man, nature, and God, which seem to be very well supported by the relevant data. And even though the metaphysician will never attain a full knowledge of anything—which would be possible only for omniscience—he may attain a knowledge of those principles of explanation and insight which can satisfy the persistent and judicious mind.

The reflections of the great philosophers about God, nature, and man have an essential validity, then, even though they may not have that warrant of formal certitude which was often claimed for them. Moreover,

they assist the Christian thinker in filling out the total background against which all expositions of the Biblical directives may be enriched. The Bible does not fully elaborate upon the relationships between the Eternal and the temporal, the Infinite and the finite, the Ultimate and the contingent. These relationships are implicit throughout the Bible, but the history of Christian thought shows that the metaphysicians have helped the theologian in his reflections and that they have enabled him to move toward the development of a total perspective within which the Christian mind may interpret both nature and history. Plato and Aristotle, Kant and Hegel, Spinoza and Leibniz, Bowne and Whitehead, and many others have in fact informed and assisted the Christian mind in understanding and interpreting itself. Their metaphysical reflections, far from being mere fabrications or poetic deliverances, have had a genuine bearing upon God and the Universe. While the works of these men have been infected with error, their insights have in large measure come out of the judicious mind in its efforts to consider the import of the available data.

Second, the profoundest philosophical minds have assisted the theologian in his apologetic efforts to capture the mind of man. There can be no doubt that one of the most important functions of the Christian theologian is that of entering into the competitive struggles for the assent of mankind. This apologetic function is seen in the work of every outstanding theologian. In the contemporary cultural situation, nothing is more evident than that the Christian thinker must make his claims amid the subtle or vociferous appeals of many perspectives. Without the assistance of the metaphysician this task cannot be most effectively done. For example, the theologian needs the assistance of the metaphysician in understanding and communicating the relationships of the latest developments in science to Christian beliefs. He needs the help of the metaphysician in critically evaluating the ultimate implications of the erroneous understanding of reality implied in scientism, dialectical materialism, evolutionary naturalism and other perspectives. He requires all the support he can get from those who, through logic and analysis, may teach him the art of clear statement and decisive argument. He can use the help of those who, in an age that has brewed many errors in philosophy, psychology, social thought, and metaphysics, can disclose the weakness in all forms of materialism—whether ancient or modern. He can be assisted also in the efforts to show the inadequacies of such intellectual fads as pragmatism, existentialism, and logical positivism.

This is particularly true with reference to logical positivism, which, in so many university departments of philosophy, has all but robbed the philosopher of his traditional and honored role of offering mankind a reasonably coherent theory of reality. It is the nature of the metaphysical mind to strive to understand things in historical perspective and in their most ultimate relationships. Moreover the theologian needs the help of the metaphysician in his effort to show the inadequacy of all impersonal or subpersonal principles of explanation. The theologian must have assistance in his efforts to require of any intellectual perspective that it either furnish or make room for a fully satisfactory principle of explanation. The persistent demand of mankind for a level of comprehensive orientation without which man's insights are confined to abstractions or systems of abstractions—this demand requires the aid and support of those relatively few towering intellects of any generation who have probed deeply into the metaphysical issues.

No great movement, whether religious or otherwise, has been able to maintain itself without a kind of intellectual framework, continuously scrutinized, which could commend itself to the thinking members of the human race and which could identify itself in the midst of recurring fads. It is no accident that the Roman Catholic Church keeps returning to Thomas Aquinas and to his Aristotelian modes of thought, ever restating and reformulating their implications. This is one of the clearest instances in the history of thought of the mighty assistance which has in fact been given to theology by a philosophical genius.

Third, the theologian requires the aid of the metaphysician in his understanding and exposition of the moral nature of man and of its significance within the vast contexts of man's associational relationships. He needs every resource to help him in his efforts to identify those modes of thought which deny or belittle man's freedom and responsibility in action, which blur his moral distinctions, and above all, which tend to make him passive in regard to the larger community and world affairs.

One more consideration, out of others, is worthy of notice here. The metaphysician can assist the theologian in the task of enlarging the Church's capacity for adoration and of deepening the experience of worship. The reflections of the philosophers on God and his relationships quicken the sense of the greatness of God and tend to awaken in man that awareness of dependence without which there can be no pro-

found experience of worship. While it is true that the generality of mankind cannot be expected to profit in this way from reflections of the philosophers, it is nevertheless true that, through the trained ministers, the theologians may and frequently do communicate that sense of the greatness of God which has in part been awakened in them by the deliverances of the outstanding philosophical minds. Though it has sometimes been true that the reflections of the philosophers on God and man have not apparently been attended by any profound experience of worship, this is a consequence not of the nature of their reflections but of the quality of their desires and personal aspirations. Granting the passionate desire to love, serve, and adore God, all profound reflections on God tend to enrich the experience of worship.

# Reflections on the Beat Generation

HOWARD R. MOODY

IN THE VERY PENNING of this title I have already left myself wide open to the epithets and sneers of my "beat" and "not-so-beat" friends who claim there is no such thing as the beat generation. All that exists, these people say, is a fantasy that has been concretized in poetry and commercialized in prose. Be that as it may, I believe there is a phenomenon here we need to address.

Jack Kerouac, the now-famous beat novelist, coined the phrase in an early novel, *The Town and the City*, applying it to himself and to a circle of friends who represented to him a complex of attitudes that existed among the younger generation across the country after World War II. John Clellon Holmes, in a recent article, says: "Beat is not so much being filled up to *here* as being emptied out. It describes a state of mind from which all unessentials have been stripped . . . to be beat is to be at the bottom of your personality looking up."<sup>1</sup> Later the meaning of beat was changed somewhat by an experience that Kerouac had in a church where he was confirmed in Lowell, Massachusetts. All alone in the church with its great silence, Kerouac discovered that beat meant beatitude—beatific. This adds another dimension to the word, which we will discuss later.

Labeling a generation can be a very dangerous form of analysis, and there will be many people who will challenge every evidence you present. For every "flip" you turn over they will tell you that they know ten happy "squares." For every high-flying junkie you mention they will produce ten "clean-cut teenagers" whose only experience with the needle was the Salk polio shot. And so the debate goes.

Nevertheless, I think there is a valid assertion that a segment of this younger generation with certain psychological and spiritual moods may be identified as the beat generation. The group may appear to normal, adjusted young people of our middle-class culture as frenzied, off-beat, rebellious. These beat ones seem like traitors to those of us who have

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<sup>1</sup> Holmes, J. C., "The Philosophy of the Beat Generation," *Esquire Magazine*, February, 1958.

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adjusted successfully—they are not willing to play the game according to the rules. Should we be surprised that in the age of “the lonely crowd,” “the organization man,” and “the hidden persuaders” we would get a generation, or at least a segment, that is sickened on the inside and rebellious on the outside at having seen human existence being squeezed into organized molds of conformity? I wonder if it is as incongruous as we like to think—this generation we have spawned, whose primary interests seem to be fast cars, long trips, jive, junk, jazz and all other related kicks.

I think that it might be valuable for us to look at the younger generation, if only to show us how far removed we are from it. Look at its background. They were born in a depression, weaned on a global war, grew to childhood amidst troop trains, rationing, and telegrams from the War Department. Their adolescence was spent in wars, both hot and cold, and now maturity has come in the shadow of nuclear holocaust. I wonder if we recognize the effects of the social and cultural cataclysms upon the lives of these young ones. John Holmes puts it succinctly in his article in *Esquire*:

The historical climate which formed its attitudes was violent and it did as much violence to ideas as it did to the men who believed in them. Conventional notions of private and public morality have been steadily atrophied in the last ten or fifteen years by the exposure of treason in government, corruption in labor and business, scandals among the mighty of Hollywood and Broadway. . . . Orthodox religion's conception of good and evil seem increasingly inadequate to explain a world of science fiction turned fact, past enemies turned bosom friends, and honorable diplomacy turned brink of war. The older generation may be disturbed or cynical or apathetic about this world, but the beat generation is specifically the product of this world and it's the only world they've ever known.<sup>2</sup>

In such a world as this there was bound to be rebellion and non-conformity. Now one of the interesting and most telling facts about the older generation and the way in which it views the younger may be seen in the looks of shock or incredulity or horror on the faces of parents, police, social workers, and ministers. They never seem to be able to get beyond what the beats are doing to their attitudes and motivations. Maybe there is a hidden guilt in the older generation about the world it handed the young; or perhaps they are afraid of what they will discover if they really search out the motivations—namely, “their own valueless and meaningless universe,” carried to its practical conclusion in the behavior of their children. Everywhere people with tidy moralities keep shaking their heads and wondering about what's happening to the younger generation.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

One of the school authorities in New York City, commenting on recent violence in the schools and anti-social behavior, said that our children reflect the adults and the world they live in. People have less to hold on to. What can they believe in? We try to make them act the way we do not. We teach them to be polite, to be generous, to believe in the sacredness of human life and to respect the rights of others. But the younger generation has eyes; they look around. They see that ultimately individuals and nations use force to solve their problems. We teach them about morals and values, but we don't practice them. A member of the shook-up generation will tell you the same thing in jazzed-up lingo.

The beat member of the younger generation doesn't feel the need to explain his marijuana "tea parties" or kicks in the stolen car or sexual indulgence—in his mind these are little things compared to the carefully planned nuclear annihilation, and the violence of adults who allowed two hot wars and continue a cold one. As one writer put it, "They see the adult world as senseless, hypocritical, violent and essentially beyond redemption. . . . Parents who have seen that opaque, nonlistening look over the faces of their teen-age children are being exposed to the most shared sentiment of the beat generation."

However, I think we will have to look deeper than nonconformity and rebellion to discover the motivations for the phenomenon called the beat generation. We need to examine the metaphysical mood of this generation. It is a generation with an almost obsessive craving to believe, and much of its frenetic activity is an overactivated form of search. Philip Lamentia, one of the San Francisco poets and a spokesman for the "hipster" element in the beat generation has a poem in which the last two lines go:

Come Holy Ghost, for we can rise  
Out of the jazz.

Asked in an interview what the relation between jazz and God was, he said, "Well, throughout the ages mankind has been searching for some kind of ecstasy, some marvelous vision of God, you know. That's why we smoke marijuana or listen to jazz. It's all just a way to ecstasy." Whether one can accept this blunt interpretation or not, I think if we look beneath the surface we will find a deep *desire to believe* coupled with an inability to do so in conventional terms. Sometimes I feel that this beat generation is possessed with such a strong passion for faith that even its atheism is metaphysical. The search for meaning and self-identity is really the search for God. As one friendly critic summed it up:

... if it must be acknowledged that God is too weak to show His face and that the Beat Generation is a generation of orphans cut off from the past and its earthly fathers, severed from the future and the kingdom of God, then the predatory heart of man, Satan, will be enshrined the Father. In the wilderness which is life without God, without meaning, God becomes manifest even in his antithesis who also provides a center, a source, a sliver of certitude.<sup>3</sup>

Part of the search has been the experimentation and investigation with all kinds of religions and cults. Zen Buddhism has been called the "new religion" of the beat generation, and there seems to be some reason to believe that there has been a revival of interest in this Eastern philosophy. However, I think the influence of Zen on the literary figures of the beat generation has been much overemphasized. Only a few of the poets and novelists have been seriously conditioned by Zen thought. It is more a fad or an experimental fling than the real (unconscious) metaphysics of the beat ones.

Gary Snyder, who is probably one of the purest Zen followers in the beat literary crowd, gives one interesting analysis of the seeming attraction of this group to Zen. He says: "It was all part of the individualistic, anarchistic, personalistic, and also religious interest that intellectuals picked up after the war. It was a reaction against the idea that society and human beings can be changed by political means. Zen in a way is even atheistic; it's what you want to make it. It even teaches against itself." This analysis certainly lends credence to a common observation about the beat generation and this is its somewhat unanimous "don't give a damn" attitude toward social and political action.

It is probably true that there are categories and emphases in Zen which appeal to the beat and which solicit in him a certain response. The most important fact is that Zen, particularly "Beat Zen" (a corrupted version of true Zen for palliative purposes), is an Eastern existentialist philosophy with strong overtones of mysticism. The *satori* (an "eternal now" in which one digs the universe the most) is very much a mystical experience of a high order. As a matter of fact it has been suggested by some observers of the "beat" phenomenon that the *satori* of Zen Buddhism, the heroin-high of the junkie, and the mysticism of Christianity, may provide a fertile field for some exploration of correlative material in these experimental states.

Another attractive emphasis in Zen is its appeal to the facts of personal experience as over against book knowledge and intellectual categories. Life must be lived—and lived to the fullest—before all the intellectual reports

<sup>3</sup> Feldman, G., & Gartenberg, M., *The Beat Generation and the Angry Young Men*, New York: Citadel Press, 1958, p. 15.

are in on its mysteries. Intensity of experience is one of the great hallmarks of the beat generation and comes as a breath of fresh air to a generation that has been suffocated by objective analysis and detached knowledge. As Suzuki, the great Zen authority, puts it: "When it comes to a question of life itself we cannot wait for the ultimate solution to be offered by the intellect. . . . The hungry cannot wait until a complete analysis of food is obtained and the nourishing value of each element is determined. For the dead the scientific knowledge of food will be of no use whatsoever."<sup>4</sup>

There are other elements in Zen that are meaningful to the beat, but it is a mistake to identify Zen Buddhism as the "religion of the beat generation." Whatever influence it does have is because it is part of this experimentation with all kinds of religion in the frenzied search for a faith.

Now lest there be any quick conclusions that this generation is ripe for easy picking on the part of the churches because of their religious search, we had better take a second look. Firstly, the church belongs to the past, which has either been rejected or ignored by the beat ones. The church also belongs to that "square world" which has been left behind and discounted by the rebels. Incidentally, it ought to be pointed out here that all ministers, professors and theologians are by definition "square" in the eyes of those who are hip to life (a square is the man who played it safe, who stuck to his own rut and his illusions, and thought that his own life embodied all decent moral values). It needs to be said that the Protestant Church, which, it seems, is irrevocably wedded to middle-class respectability and status quo, is selling nothing the beat ones want and particularly not in the containers we are selling it in, nor the sales talk that goes with it. If the church can get over its shock and show of disgust at the beat generation and the bizarreness with which it sometimes expresses its rebellion, it may yet show some sensitivity and sympathy for a generation fed up with the world as it has been handed them, and looking for something more than a warm-bathed, well-heated, upholstered existence. However, the elation of religious professionals who understand that there is a search for faith going on among the beat ones must be tempered by the knowledge that a generation with a deep obsession to believe is always tempted (even as middle-class suburban culture) to create new deities for worship. And invented gods invariably disappoint those who worship them; only the *need* for them goes on. Charlie Parker as God and Kerouac as his prophet will grow old and out of date. Herbert Gold in an article on "The Beat

<sup>4</sup> Suzuki, D. T., *Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings*, ed. by William Barrett. Doubleday Anchor Book, 1956, p. 13.

Mystique" has a very discerning statement about the religious kick in hipsterism:

Promiscuity in religion stands like heroin for despair, a feverish embracing of despair, a passive shrinking into irrationality. Zen and other religions surely have their beauties, but the hipster dives through them like a sideshow acrobat through a paper hoop into the icy water of self-distrust below. The religious activities of the hipsters cure their unease in the world the way dancing cheek to cheek cures halitosis.<sup>5</sup>

The substitutes that the beat makes for the religious tradition he has overcome are very interesting to observe. For example, the "poetry readings" in the New York coffee houses that bear a curious resemblance to the religious revival meetings—the charismatic personality of the beat young poet who has replaced the "sermon" with a "poem"; the sporadic and spontaneous "yeah, man!" that punctuates the poetry and sounds suspiciously like the "amen" of the revival meeting; the ecstatic murmurings that accompany the poet as he reaches emotional intensity are reminiscent of speaking in tongues in early revivalism. I'm sure that the beat would reject this comparison with the kind of contempt that only the beat can find for a square, but it is interesting to note that our rebellion is never so complete as we would like to believe. It is my conviction that the strongest religious influence in the beat generation is the Judeo-Christian one, and that the beat is much more apt to take his spiritual cue not from Hui-neng but from St. John of the Cross or William Blake.

The writings of Kerouac, Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti and Company are loaded with Biblical allusions and categories. From the numinous experience of Dean Moriarty in Kerouac's *On the Road* to the prophetic cry in the wilderness of Ginsberg's *Howl*, there is great evidence of the Jewish and Christian roots of the beat writers. They may "go" with Zen, Yoga and all other flights from reality, but their metaphysical home, however far they have traveled, is still the Judeo-Christian reading of human existence.

If the church would speak relevantly to this generation it must keep its ears opened for the things that are being said by the beat—look past his actions, his kicks and his coolness, to the motivation of the beat. The church must join the beat in his protest against a culture that has stolen the birthright of his individuality and excised his spirit by the growing collectivity and dead-level mediocrity of a mass society.

The church ought also to warn the beat of the temptation to retreat

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<sup>5</sup> Gold, Herbert, "The Beat Mystique," *Playboy Magazine*.

completely from life. To resign from the society as the hipster has done—to decide the problem does not really exist for them, to leave it to the “squares” to be frantic about the “crazy mixed-up world.” The fact of the matter is that the “cool cat” can’t get out of it either, so he is apt to become the victim of the most hopeless condition of slavery—the slave who does not know he is a slave and is proud of his slavery, calling it “freedom.” If the rebellion against the square society leads to self-indulgent individualism that does not care, there is no hope in this generation.

How tragic if the church is rejected for cultural reasons rather than for the square! One witness which the gospel makes clear throughout is the universality and availability of the Christ. He is the Christ of the squares and the hipsters, the clean-cut and the junkie, the long-hair and the bopster. He is the Christ of the lost generation, the beat generation, and the unborn generations. We must proclaim that Christ brings a freedom and a peace unsurpassed in the beat’s jazzy ecstasy, the junkie in his heroin height, or the beat-Buddhist in his *satori*. In Christ’s name the church must strive to be that affirming community that accepts the individualist without squeezing him into a new conformity. To every beat in search of life’s meaning and destiny the church must say welcome to the pilgrimage.



# Existentialism: Philosophy or Theology?

RICHARD S. FORD

THE TERM *EXISTENTIALISM* is a relatively new word in philosophical circles. Although faint murmurs of existential concepts may be heard in the writings of Nietzsche, Bergson, Marx, and clearer indications in Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky, it can be asserted that existentialism is mostly a product of the disillusionment and despair of the Twentieth Century. In a relatively short span of time existentialism has sought to be recognized as a philosophical movement in its own right. It is difficult to find a contrary point of view expressed in the universities of Germany today.<sup>1</sup> Sartre, Marcel, Jaspers, though differing greatly in their concepts of it, insist equally upon its character as a philosophy.

The affinity of existentialism with certain theological expressions is well known. The crisis theologies of Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Reinhold Niebuhr, and their followers find great comfort in existentialist ideas. Carl Michalson observes: "It is an intellectual event of major importance that theology is now turning for its definition of freedom to existentialism, for there philosophical and theological concerns have come together in a way unprecedented in Western thought."<sup>2</sup> Even as cautious a theologian as Brunner states, "It is therefore particularly suggestive for us theologians to attach ourselves to this philosophy (existentialism), the entire bent of which seems to correspond with ours."<sup>3</sup>

There are two questions which the writer would seek to answer. First, what *is* existentialism? Secondly, in the light of the close affinity between existential philosophy and crisis theology, is this movement a

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<sup>1</sup> Cerf, Walter, "Existentialist Mannerism and Education," *Journal of Philosophy*, 52:141-151, March 17, 1955.

<sup>2</sup> Michalson, Carl, "Faith and Existential Freedom," *RELIGION IN LIFE*, Autumn, 1952, p. 513.

<sup>3</sup> Brunner, Emil, *The Divine-Human Encounter*, trans. Amandus W. Loos, The Westminster Press, 1943, p. 82.

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new philosophical system, or is it a pseudo-philosophy based upon implicit but unexpressed theological presuppositions?

A major difficulty confronting anyone who seeks to discuss existentialism lies in the endeavor to define the term. One can find almost as many definitions as writers upon the subject. However, this is not unexpected in view of the emphasis within the movement upon subjectivity. Rather than hazard a definition at this time, the writer would suggest a procedure of examining the characteristics which seem to be reflected in the various approaches to existentialism. In this way a composite picture of what existentialism is may emerge.

### I. THE NATURE OF EXISTENTIALISM

Seven aspects of existentialism can be discerned which constitute the major characteristics of the movement. It is recognized that none of them is an entity in itself. All overlap and embrace each other. None can be spoken of without reference to a different one as well. The somewhat stilted division into categories would be resented by some existentialists as an ill-fated attempt to be objective about that which can only be apprehended subjectively; nevertheless some such procedure becomes necessary for the sake of communication.

1. *Existence is prior to essence.* Existential philosophy has upset the classical position of philosophy by asserting that existence is prior to essence. The question of essence is *what* a thing is. The question of existence is *that* a thing is. The latter question is an either-or proposition. Either a thing *is*, or it *is not*. It has existence, or it does not. It is from this either-or characteristic of existence that existentialism begins, as is readily apparent in the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. He begins his thought with the question of existence because it is the proper introduction to ontology. He maintains that the question of existence is fundamentally the question of Being, the ontological concern.<sup>4</sup> Paul Tillich also shares this perspective.<sup>5</sup>

Heidegger argues that in order to determine an adequate ontology one must begin with the only kind of being with which we are really in contact, which is the being of man. Ordinarily man is in the common everyday world of "everyman," not truly existing because he is not consciously aware of his own existence. Only by traversing certain experiences, like anguish, does man find himself in the presence of Noth-

<sup>4</sup> Wahl, Jean, *A Short History of Existentialism*, Philosophical Library, 1949, pp. 11f.

<sup>5</sup> Tillich, Paul, *The Courage to Be*, Yale University Press, 1952.

ingness from which true being erupts. Flung into a meaningless world man knows only *that* he is in the face of Nothing. This confrontation reveals to him his inescapable freedom, together with the knowledge that by his own decision and choice he alone gives meaning to an otherwise meaningless world. Thus man's existence precedes his essence. Once aware of his own existence, he creates or constructs essence from it. Heidegger would acknowledge that one can look for and find essences of material things and implements, but there can be no essence of the existent individual, man.<sup>6</sup>

Thus the "essential aspect" of the existent man is the recognition that he only *is*, and that whatever he is to become he creates himself. His existence becomes apparent only after a confrontation experience in which he becomes aware of this freedom to create his own essence.

2. *Existence transcends the rational.* The existentialist movement has arisen as a revolt against reason. The rationalism which has controlled Western thought from the close of the Middle Ages until the present has failed to solve the problems of man, so the existentialists assert. Therefore the critical, rationalistic, empirical, objective approach to an understanding of reality is rejected in favor of a new perspective whose concepts are subjectivity, possibility, contingency, and meaninglessness. Objectification destroys existence; rather, it destroys the existence of the individual. The authentic existential mode of being can be realized only through subjectivity. One's own subjective moods give the clue to reality. The position of Søren Kierkegaard, father of the movement, may be summed up: "The illusion is that reality is something that can be known, when indeed it is something to be lived."<sup>7</sup> In place of intellectual consistency, meaning becomes the basic concept for the existentialist. This meaning is a unique, purely individualistic concept brought into existence by the individual.

The rejection of reason and the emphasis upon meaninglessness apart from self-created meaning implies that the activity, feeling, and thought of the individual give the most significant clue to reality. Hence the individual must be free and self-motivating. It is the nature of this freedom which provides our third category.

3. *Existence condemns man to be free.* The experience of freedom is central in existentialist thought. It has already been suggested that

<sup>6</sup> Wahl, Jean, *op. cit.*, pp. 12ff.

<sup>7</sup> Niebuhr, H. Richard, "Søren Kierkegaard," *Christianity and the Existentialists*, ed. Carl Michalson. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956, p. 30.

the existentialist finds the world to be meaningless. Things exist, but their existence appears as accidental. They happen to be, but they might just as well not be. They are stamped with an all-pervasive contingency. To live and to act means for man to give existence to the merely possible. Life is the transformation of the nonexistent as possible into existent actuality. This is a personal act, a decisive act which man cannot escape. It is thus the act of freedom.

Viewed from the standpoint of the existentialist encounter with Nothingness, of which more will be said later, this human freedom is absolute. One *has* to choose. There are no fixed norms either within the individual or outside him in which he can take refuge from this demand for decision. Authentic existence results only when one makes the "resolute decision" to take upon himself his own destiny, instead of fleeing into the world of things and refusing to face the abyss of Nothingness.

When man learns that he *must* be free, that he is condemned to freedom, he experiences deep anxiety. This is a necessary stage through which he must pass before he can achieve the authentic life. The nature of this anxiety becomes our next concern.

4. *Man is anxious in the face of Nothingness.* The existentialist tells us that man is forced to strip himself of the illusion of an objective world containing objective truth. He must go to the edge of the abyss of Nothingness and find there the awful fact that he is forced into absolute freedom. Facing this freedom, man is beset by an uneasy anxiety, the dread of freedom, the dread of the necessity of deciding among infinite possibilities. It is the terror of his own awful responsibility. This feeling of dread is ultimately the dread of Nothing, or of the possibility which Nothing demands. Kierkegaard calls this the dread of "a nothing vaguely hinted at."<sup>8</sup>

Paul Tillich declares that this anxiety has ontological priority over all other moods and feelings, for it is this feeling which leads man to the ultimate despair, the boundary-line situation which is a necessary stage in man's progress towards authentic existence. One must go through the Slough of Despond in order to achieve authenticity.

A condition of deep despair overcomes one. Doubt wins a total victory over certitude, and one becomes aware of the irrelevancy and

<sup>8</sup> Kierkegaard, Søren, *The Concept of Dread*, trans. Walter Lowrie, Princeton University Press, 1944, p. 38.

meaninglessness of the world. Wrenched away from Being, the anguished mind now confronts only Nothingness.

5. *Existence involves estrangement.* The traditional position of philosophy has been to look for, and to discover, certain signs which reveal a comprehensive orderliness to the world. The existentialist looks at the world and finds that, instead of signs, it is characterized by a sense of alienation and estrangement. It is a world without signs. In the experience in which man encounters Nothingness, he becomes estranged. The things around him which formerly were familiar and meaningful lose their meaning. Man's status amidst reality becomes that of a total stranger. One is estranged from the world. It is contingent, mere possibility, without guideposts which can show the way to any significant reality. This estrangement from the world also becomes self-alienation. *Unheimlichkeit*, the uncanny, insidiously mysterious "unhomelikeness" is expressed as man's alienation from the world due to self-alienation, a fundamental defect in man's nature.<sup>9</sup> This estrangement of self and of the world removes the common order which is the basis for communion; therefore man is forced into solitude. "It holds the individual in solitary confinement within the impervious walls of this individuality."<sup>10</sup>

The pattern of existentialism now begins to take form. Man must come face to face with the terrible fact of Nothing. His alienation is symptomatic of an unconscious uneasiness in the face of this coming encounter. When he meets Nothingness, he becomes aware of the dreadful reality of his own freedom and is filled with despair. All that has heretofore been meaningful in his world, in himself, and in his relationships with others now becomes estranged and alienated. Is there a way out of this predicament? Such is the concern of the next aspect of existentialism.

6. *The individual must endure crisis.* The philosophy of existentialism has been called the "philosophy of crisis," and rightly so, from several standpoints.<sup>11</sup> First, it is concerned with the crisis of the contemporary world. Secondly, it is a philosophy of crisis in that it focuses attention upon the predicament of the individual as he faces the crucial issues of life. To be an existential individual is to be totally concerned

<sup>9</sup> Kuhn, Helmut, *Encounter With Nothingness*, Henry Regnery Company, 1949, pp. 30f.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>11</sup> Heineemann, Frederick H., *Existentialism and the Modern Predicament*. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1953, p. 167.

about one's ultimate destiny. Finally, existentialism is a philosophy of crisis in the sense that crisis itself is a necessary stage through which one must pass in order to realize one's authentic selfhood. It is the nature of this individual crisis experience which is the concern at present.

The individual, through the prodding of an ontological anxiety, seeks deeper and deeper into his own subjective moods until finally he is confronted with the fact of nonbeing; he encounters the "reality of Nothing." In this encounter he is confronted with his own freedom. This fills him with dread which deepens into despair. The nadir of the crisis is reached. Man *must* now make a decision. The individual, in the face of this crisis, must make a choice which affects him ultimately. The self, threatened with disintegration in the face of its existential analysis, must choose itself in order to find authentic selfhood. At the climax of the crisis man must make a choice, a leap, in order to find himself. This leap is a return to the immediacy of experience, defined in many ways by the various exponents of existentialism. This return is the concluding aspect of this analysis of existentialism.

7. *Existentialism involves a return to immediacy.* The leap of the existentialist individual involves, not a choice between objective alternatives, but an intensity of feeling. Kierkegaard expresses this thought as the way of faith. "An objective uncertainty held fast in the most passionate personal experience is the truth, the highest truth attainable for the Existing Individual."<sup>12</sup> The return to immediacy of experience is thus in terms of intensity of feelings. The emotions have ontological significance, "half-symbolic, half-realistic indications of the structure of Reality itself."<sup>13</sup>

The content of the return to immediacy varies with the existentialist thinker, for the point at which one lands after the "leap" is not suggested by the drama leading to the crisis. This radical discontinuity is interpreted differently by various existentialists. The psychological concept of projection is helpful in understanding this return. The individual, in the process of relating himself to a reference or "object" of knowledge, interposes a construct of his own making between himself and the object. Thus what one perceives is not the object, but one's own perception of the object in terms of his own projection system. The projection system of the individual may break

<sup>12</sup> Kierkegaard, Søren, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. D. F. Swenson and W. Lowrie, Princeton University Press, 1941, p. 279.

<sup>13</sup> Tillich, Paul, "Existential Philosophy," *The Journal of the History of Ideas*, January, 1944, p. 55.



down. The "world" of the individual, in which he was at home, collapses, and he is thrown back upon his own subjectivity. This breakdown thus constitutes a return to immediacy. It is a return to the world of the real self, which is a state of estrangement from that which it formerly knew as its familiar world. The new, irrational, meaningless surroundings become what the existentialists refer to as "the horrifying encounter with Nothingness."<sup>14</sup>

The individual cannot, however, remain in the state of pure subject without relating himself to some otherness. He may do this either by constructing a new, narrower projection system which has every referend ultimately determined within the self, or, finally aware of his genuine selfhood, he may move into relationships with other subjects, acknowledging their affirmative being as selves like unto himself. These represent the extremes of a continuum upon which the various existentialists may be placed: Sartre at the pole of essential solipsism, and Marcel and Buber at the relational pole.

## II. PHILOSOPHY OR RELIGIOUS PILGRIMAGE?

Before an answer to the question whether existentialism is a philosophy or a theology can be answered, it is necessary to define what is meant by these terms. The writer would assert that there is a significant distinction between the two disciplines.

Philosophy is that field which seeks to secure a systematic and comprehensive understanding *about* the universe. Through dispassionate rational methods it endeavors to correlate all aspects of existence in order to discover a unified and coherent definition *of* the real.

Theology, on the other hand, begins with a religious "given." It starts with a particular framework of religious beliefs and experiences which it seeks to organize into a systematic and coherent account which will aid in relating the individual to reality. It springs from an already committed frame of mind, and its goal is not understanding, but salvation.

Let us now look at existentialism in light of these definitions. Two questions can be asked. Does this movement have an affinity with certain theological presuppositions? Does it contain certain philosophical limitations?

The brief examination of the basic characteristics of existentialism

<sup>14</sup> Rhoades, Donald H., "Essential Varieties of Existentialism," *The Personalist*, January, 1954, pp. 32-40.

are suggestive of a progressive drama rather than a philosophical system. It appears to be a religious pilgrimage through the feelings and subjective moods of the individual into the depths of a total despair whose ontological character gives a clue to the authentic nature of Being. In the crisis of despair the individual makes the leap of faith, that resolute decision to choose in the face of absolute freedom. Through this passionate choice he returns to the immediacy of his own experience in which he finds his true, authentic selfhood.

Is not this existentialist dialectic the return of the religious element into the world? From existence lost, man moves to existence regained. Instead of the understanding of philosophy, the salvation of religion is achieved, whether described in religious or nonreligious terms.<sup>15</sup> May this not be an old theology reappearing in a new costume? A number of affinities with Reformation theology are readily apparent.

Characteristic of much of Reformation theology is the assertion that man is totally depraved, lost in a hopeless predicament. Is this not echoed in Heidegger's *Unheimlichkeit*? Man's guilt is a part of his very nature. Certainly this point of view is characteristic of Kierkegaard, upon whom even Heidegger and Sartre acknowledge dependence, though grudgingly perhaps.

A striking similarity to existentialism appears in John Calvin's writings. He is concerned with the horror with which man is struck when he is confronted by God and realizes for the first time the despatchedness of his own plight.<sup>16</sup> This is the forerunner of Kierkegaard's concept of dread, which appears in various forms in the thought of contemporary existentialists as a deepening of despair in the face of the encounter, whether this encounter be with Nothing as in Sartre, or with God as in Jaspers.

The use which contemporary theology makes of the crisis experience need hardly be mentioned. Barth acknowledges the derivation of this view from his re-examination of Reformation thought. Does existentialism derive it from the same source? The leap of faith necessary both to existentialism and to crisis theology is required also in the concept of Justification by Faith of Luther and Calvin.

A further parallel between Calvinistic theology and existential philosophy occurs in the concept of estrangement. The individual in

<sup>15</sup> Mounier, Emmanuel, *Existential Philosophies*, trans. Eric Blow. Bristol: Ranking Bros., Ltd., 1948, p. 129.

<sup>16</sup> *Institutes*, Book I, Chapter 1, Par. 3.

Calvin's thought is not at home in the world; he is in a desperate situation, estranged, alienated from the Absolute Sovereign God. So, too, in existential philosophy man is estranged, a lost soul in a meaningless existence. What has been described as the character of existentialism emerges in the form of a description of the salvation experience of the individual in Reformation theology.

It is apparent that a striking parallel exists between existential philosophy and the Reformation heritage. Is it unreasonable to ask, are these concepts so indispensable to this movement that it is in reality a new form of this theology rather than a philosophy?

The second question of philosophical limitations adds further support to this viewpoint. Several obvious lacks appear within existentialism which tend to discredit it as a philosophical system. Existentialism does stand with all philosophy upon the assumption that there is truth to be found. However, the movement rejects the further assumption of philosophy, namely, that this truth can be rationally described, systematized, and communicated. Within existentialism epistemology is a matter of subjective feeling tones; therefore no demonstrable truth is possible. One of the chief "ground rules" of philosophy is hereby rejected. Furthermore, a serious question can be raised whether or not a philosophical system can exist which is not subject to rational investigation and examination. Philosophy seeks to give a systematic, coherent account of truth. Existentialism denies that this can be done at all. The philosopher's concern for a means of verification of alleged truth goes unanswered in this movement. Such verification as is possible consists merely of "subjective verification" in terms of the intensity of one's moods. Is this verification at all as philosophers understand it? Can flight into subjectivity qualify as a philosophy?

Additional philosophical difficulties appear at the point of providing a coherent account of existence. No such account appears in existentialism. Existence is an achieved state of the individual. Can the existentialist say when one reaches the "age of decision" at which he becomes existent man through his own free act? Perhaps this is the religious problem of confirmation. The assumptions of the existentialist are propositions "accepted as true," implying that the only basis for them is faith. It is highly significant that only within a particular theological context, then, do these concepts have intelligibility.

Finally, there is the serious break in the existential drama at the point of the leap of faith. There is no indication whatsoever in the

prior activity of the individual moving toward crisis through despair what the possible landing point beyond the leap may be. The necessity is to leap; where the individual lands is irrelevant. This is unintelligible. However, when one moves this into the perspective of Reformation theology, it becomes highly intelligible, and the landing point becomes clear. Could it be that the existential thinkers have not embraced *enough* of Reformation thought?

Existentialism has called the attention of all of us to some aspects of experience which we may have been tempted to overlook in our concern for rational consistency. For this we are grateful. However, the obvious dependency of existential thinkers upon the theological concerns of the Reformation expressed through Søren Kierkegaard, coupled with their failure to "play the game" philosophically, would suggest that this movement has yet to establish itself as a philosophy. Rather, it is a reformulation, sometimes in a nontheistic framework, of some of the basic presuppositions underlying Reformation theology. It is old faith in new disguise.

# Religion and the Arts

## A Second Look at G. K. Chesterton

JANET GASSMAN

IT IS TRULY AMAZING, when one pauses to reflect on it, how many of us the Creator has endowed with that precious gift called life and how few of us ever have had the presence of mind to say "Thank you." Gilbert Keith Chesterton was one of those few. "Ingratitude," he wrote, "is surely the chief of the intellectual sins of man,"<sup>1</sup> and he took care never to be guilty of it. Life was to him a never-ending cause for wonder and he could not imagine why others seemed so apathetic about it all. "In the ultimate and universal sense I am astonished at the lack of astonishment. Starting from scratch, so to speak, we are all in the position of the first frog, whose pious and compact prayer was 'Lord, how you made me jump!'"<sup>2</sup>

In return for this precious substance of life, G. K., as he was known to his contemporaries, gave freely of his thoughts. For more than thirty-five years the world was overwhelmed by the copious works which flowed from his pen on everything from "The Advantages of Having One Leg" to his eloquent defense of the reasonableness of the Christian religion which is found in his book *Orthodoxy*. Chesterton gave in many ways but, as he wrote of St. Francis, "cared chiefly for the best kind of giving which is called thanksgiving."<sup>3</sup>

Not only did he know how to give thanks, but perhaps rarer still, he knew how to accept blame. In his *Autobiography* he confesses: "I regret . . . that I cannot do my duty as a true modern, by cursing

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Browning, The Macmillan Company, 1903, p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> *Fancies Versus Facts*, Dodd, Mead & Company, 1923, p. 174.

<sup>3</sup> *St. Francis of Assisi*, George H. Doran Company, 1924, p. 230f.

<sup>4</sup> Sheed & Ward, 1936, p. 22.

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everybody who made me whatever I am. I am not clear what that is; but I am pretty sure that most of it is my own fault."<sup>4</sup>

Who was this astonishing creature whose chief idea in life was that things ought not to be taken for granted, but with gratitude? Of what species was he who looked continually at things as if for the first time and in his delight at their newness could describe a simple chair as "an apparatus of four wooden legs for a cripple with only two"?<sup>5</sup> He was an Englishman, but more than that he was a man. G. K. Chesterton first opened his eyes on May 29, 1874—though he claimed this was only hearsay evidence for he himself didn't remember—and, if we were to judge by the amount of his writing, never closed them till his death, June 14, 1936.<sup>6</sup> He lived his early years at Campden Hill, Kensington, with his younger brother Cecil, his mother and father. His childhood, if we are to take his word for it, was happy. Like most English children he went to school to get an education; this period in his life he describes as "the period during which I was . . . instructed by somebody I did not know, about something I did not want to know."<sup>6</sup> Despite his conscientious effort to conceal any intelligence he might possess, his teachers recognized his potential ability. In his own inimitable style he says: "It was, if anything, the authorities who dragged me, in my own despite, out of the comfortable and protected atmosphere of obscurity and failure. Personally, I was perfectly happy at the bottom of the class."<sup>8</sup>

After his schooling at St. Paul's he spent some time in an art school but finally entered the field of journalism where he was to distinguish himself as the most prolific essayist of his time. He made many friends, among them Hilaire Belloc with whom he usually agreed and George Bernard Shaw with whom he seldom agreed. Of his differences with Shaw he said he thought they all came back to a religious difference, as indeed he thought all differences did. (G. B. put his faith in Superman; G. K. put his faith in Man.) During this time he struggled through paganism to agnosticism and finally to Catholicism.

After numerous essays, books, plays, poems and pictures, Chesterton died in June of 1936 shortly after completing his autobiography.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by F. A. Lea in *Modern Christian Revolutionaries*, ed. by Donald Attwater, The Devin-Adair Company, 1947, p. 109.

<sup>6</sup> For a delightful biography of Chesterton see Maisie Ward, *Gilbert Keith Chesterton*, Sheed & Ward, 1943; also her *Return to Chesterton*, Sheed & Ward, 1952.

<sup>7</sup> *Autobiography*, p. 52.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.



To those who had followed his weekly articles in the *Daily News* the news of his passing was scarcely believable. "A world without Chesterton is inconceivable," wrote one admirer.<sup>9</sup> Another said, "I confess I believe a saint has gone from us."<sup>10</sup> From his very dear friend Hilaire Belloc comes perhaps the highest tribute: "To him should more fully apply than to any other of our contemporaries the capital sentence:—'The business of a man is to discover reality and having discovered it to hand it on to his fellows.'"<sup>11</sup>

## II

If there was one thing in which Chesterton put his faith, it was the Common Man, who he felt was both absurd and sublime. In his illuminating book, *Heretics*, he accuses G. B. Shaw of failing to understand this sentiment. "Mr. Shaw cannot understand that the thing which is valuable and lovable in our eyes is man—the old beer-drinking, creed-making, fighting, failing, sensual, respectable man. . . ."<sup>12</sup>

For the Common Man he never tired of fighting. He was furious with novelists who wrote about a poor man as if he were something other than a man. In an article in the *American Mercury* he wrote: "I do not adore him [the Common Man], but I do believe in him."<sup>13</sup> G. K. had the utmost respect for man's intellectual capacity and divided the intellectual world into two types of people: "those who worship the intellect and those who use it."<sup>14</sup> The two, he claimed, were rarely found in the same person.

His highest admiration went to the humble man who saw the sun as the sun, the sea as the sea, and realized when he looked at men in a crowd that they were not only alive, but they were not dead. But the humble man was not one with low aims; on the contrary, the humble man had the highest ideals. (G. K. once wrote that he'd rather share his apartment with a man who thought himself God than with one who thought himself a grasshopper.) The most important thing about a man, according to Chesterton, was his view of the universe. And the most amazing thing about the universe, in his eyes, was that it exists, not that we can discuss its existence. What a man thinks about is not so

<sup>9</sup> John Cournoos of *The New York Times*.

<sup>10</sup> *Catholic World*, 143:522 (August, 1936), Theodore Maynard.

<sup>11</sup> *Saturday Review of Literature*, 14:3-4 (July 4, 1936).

<sup>12</sup> John Lane Co., New York, 1905, p. 66.

<sup>13</sup> "Persecuting the Common Man," *American Mercury* 37:71 (Jan., 1936).

<sup>14</sup> *The Thing: Why I Am a Catholic*, Dodd, Mead & Company, 1930, p. 47.

important as how he thinks about it. "It does not so very much matter whether a man eats a grilled tomato or a plain tomato; it does very much matter whether he eats a plain tomato with a grilled mind."<sup>15</sup>

It is clear from his writing that Gilbert Keith Chesterton believed in the equality of all men. "For religion all men are equal, as all pennies are equal, because the only value in any of them is that they bear the image of the King."<sup>16</sup> To anyone who doubted this, to anyone who insisted that some men were made for thinking and ruling while others were made for working and obeying, he would probably have answered:

About all those arguments affecting human equality, I myself always have one feeling, which finds expression in a little test of my own. I shall begin to take seriously those classifications of superiority and inferiority, when I find a man classifying himself as inferior. . . . I shall believe the doctrine when I hear somebody say: "I have only got the wits to turn a wheel." That would be realistic. . . .<sup>17</sup>

G. K. could not have been other than a democrat and still have felt as he did about the average man. Democracy, he wrote, does not pity the Common Man because he is so miserable; it reveres him because he is so sublime. "It does not object so much to the ordinary man being a slave as to his not being a king, for its dream is always the dream of the first Roman republic, a nation of kings."<sup>18</sup>

Chesterton did not think capitalism was the way to make all men kings; he accepted Marx's analysis of the fundamental contradiction of the capitalistic system of economics. Indeed he was fiercely against the whole idea of a mechanized society with its depersonalized mode of living and loss of individuality. He considered this specialization the real enemy of democracy.

Once men sang round a table in chorus; now one man sings alone, for the absurd reason that he can sing better. If scientific civilization goes on (which is most improbable) only one man will laugh, because he can laugh better than the rest. . . . That is the whole essence of decadence, the effacement of five people who do a thing for fun by one person who does it for money.<sup>19</sup>

At one time in his life Chesterton was a Liberal, later a Socialist; he evolved into a Distributist, taking with him what was positive of

<sup>15</sup> *Heretics*, p. 136.

<sup>16</sup> *The Man Who Was Chesterton*, compiled and edited by Raymond T. Bond, Dodd, Mead & Company, 1943, p. 355.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 471. This quotation is from G. K.'s *The Outline of Sanity*, a book which contains his theory of Distributism.

<sup>18</sup> *Heretics*, p. 268.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229, 230.

socialism and liberalism. He sought to put man back as master of the machine and this work occupied a great part of his time in later life. In *What's Wrong With the World?* he continually stresses this theme. He deplored the changing of heads to fit hats instead of vice versa. "Soon they will be twisting necks to suit clean collars, and hacking feet to fit new boots. It never seems to strike them that the body is more than raiment; that the Sabbath was made for man. . . ." <sup>20</sup>

Man was not a cog in a wheel or a robot to Chesterton, who sought to retain the personal element in society. In distributism he could keep it; he could remain a democrat. In his book he says that the real vision and magnet of mankind is and will remain the idea of private property universal but private, of families free but still families, of domesticity democratic and yet domestic, and of one man, one house.<sup>21</sup> Society, he felt, should be based on brotherhood, and he believed this democracy had been more nearly achieved in the past in the days of the small shopkeepers. He did not, as some thought, want a complete return of the past, but he claimed the right to use what was of worth in it and not to reject it simply because it had been tried. He expresses it rather eloquently in the following passage which I quote at length because it shows Chesterton at his crusading best.

There is one metaphor of which the moderns are very fond; they are always saying, "You can't put the clock back." The simple and obvious answer is "You can." A clock, being a piece of human construction, can be restored by the human finger to any figure or hour. In the same way society, being a piece of human construction, can be reconstructed upon any plan that has ever existed.

There is another proverb, "As you have made your bed, so you must lie on it"; which again is simply a lie. If I have made my bed uncomfortable, please God I will make it again. . . . That is, as I say, the first freedom that I claim: the freedom to restore. . . . I merely declare my independence. I merely claim my choice of all the tools in the universe; and I shall not admit that any of them are blunted merely because they have been used.<sup>22</sup>

But his movement never took hold, possibly because the bankruptcy he predicted as inevitable due to the capitalistic system never materialized and his message lost some of its urgency for the Common Man. Then too, when Hitler began arming Germany, Chesterton advocated rearmament for England. This rearmament was in contradiction to the dis-

<sup>20</sup> Dodd, Mead & Company, 1910, p. 355.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41, 43.

tributist ideal of the abolishment of industrialism.<sup>23</sup> (At such a time perhaps only a pacifist could have retained the distributist ideal. G. K. Chesterton was most emphatically not a pacifist; he believed that certain things were worth fighting for, and for them he fought—generally with his pen, but had the occasion presented itself he would have fought unhesitatingly with the sword.) It may be as one reviewer said: "Economics was not Chesterton's strong point. His great strength was in his love of life."<sup>24</sup>

### III

After *Heretics* came out many people challenged Chesterton to state positively what he did believe, as he had said a great deal about what he didn't believe. His answer was *Orthodoxy*, published in 1909, which was his public confession of faith. In it he explains why and how he was driven to accept the Catholic faith *in toto*. Ultimately it boils down to this: the Church had revealed itself to him as a "truth-telling thing."<sup>25</sup>

Never had orthodoxy had such an eloquent defender nor so unorthodox a one. Indeed many thought the book a joke, which was the last thing it was. As he states in his autobiography, he never took his books or essays seriously; he did his opinions. If he appeared to take religion lightly, it is only because it was vitally serious to him and he was convinced of its truth. One is only solemn, he felt, about the things one doubts; when one is sure he can afford to be gay.

The philosopher's main problem, according to Chesterton in this book, is how one can be astonished at the world while at the same time being at home in it. His problem as an agnostic was that he was astonished but not at home. He was a pagan because he believed man was made for joy, and felt all Christians were either Puritans or Calvinists. When he discovered that he had his facts wrong he was compelled to become Christian in order to remain pagan. An irresistible force met an immovable object and something had to give. He was delighted to find that now the universe had meaning. "... I had always believed that the world involved magic: now I thought perhaps it involved a magician. And this pointed a profound emotion always present and sub-conscious; that this world of ours has some purpose; and if

<sup>23</sup> For a more detailed and an excellent discussion of Chesterton's theory of distributism, see *Modern Christian Revolutionaries*, edited by Donald Attwater, Devin-Adair Company, 1947. Section on G. K. done by F. A. Lea.

<sup>24</sup> *Saturday Review of Literature* 14:8 (June 27, 1936).

<sup>25</sup> John Lane Co., New York, 1908, p. 291.

there is a purpose, there is a person."<sup>26</sup> In the Church he found a home and having found it, never left it.

Though it was not till 1922 that he joined the Church, there never was anything in this first statement of faith he would have repudiated. Some years later he wrote a book called *The Thing: Why I Am a Catholic*, saying to those who thought his faith a big joke: "Now what we have really got to hammer into the heads of all these people, somehow, is that a thinking man can think himself deeper and deeper into Catholicism, but not deeper and deeper into difficulties about Catholicism. We have got to make them see that conversion is the beginning of an active, fruitful, progressive and even adventurous life of the intellect."<sup>27</sup>

G. K. had tremendous confidence in man's reason; he had even more confidence in his new-found faith. He saw no conflict between the two because, he said, to assert that our thoughts bear any relation to reality is itself an act of faith; hence reason is founded on faith. Now one may wonder how he who believed so firmly in reasoning things for oneself could accept the Catholic dogma. The problem probably never occurred to him, for he did not see dogma dogmatically, but freshly, as he saw everything. He was convinced that there were only two types of people: those who believed in dogma and knew it and those who believed in dogma and didn't know it. For dogmas are only conclusions, and "The human brain is a machine for coming to conclusions; if it cannot come to conclusions, it is rusty. . . . Trees have no dogmas. Turnips are singularly broad-minded."<sup>28</sup> Reality, he claimed, doesn't change. Therefore, since the Church has the truth in the form of dogmas, he saw no reason for changing beliefs as one does skirt lengths—according to fashion. Catholic dogma, he felt, was the source of the world's social sanity, and Protestants, humanitarians, and pagans all worshiped only fragments. Thus he had more admiration for one who rejected Catholicism in its entirety than for one who rejected it piece by piece. That Catholicism contained the whole truth was his firm conviction and on this assumption he based all his arguments.

But I cannot help wondering if Chesterton went far enough. Having discovered that Catholicism was not composed of Puritans and Calvinists, he nevertheless seemed to assume that that was all there was to Protestantism. I doubt that G. K. ever investigated Protestantism

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109, 110.

<sup>27</sup> Dodd, Mead & Company, 1930, p. 210.

<sup>28</sup> *Heretics*, p. 285, 286.

very deeply. When others suggested he had yielded his right to think through all questions to an infallible Pope, he evaded by saying there were many other things to think about other than what the dogma covered. True, he said, "I am unable to imagine any human being accepting any authority that he has not originally reached by reason."<sup>29</sup> But in the same book, some 34 pages later, he writes: "Religious doubt produced a good deal of doubtful religion. . . . But I, for one, have found that one advantage of a man ceasing to doubt about religion is that he is much more free to doubt about everything else."<sup>30</sup> Could it not be that G. K. ceased doubting prematurely? Surely religion is the very thing that should be continually doubted and tested, for religion, as I'm sure he would have agreed, is the most important thing in life. It is life. "Becoming a Catholic," he wrote, "broadens the mind."<sup>31</sup> When one investigates, doubts, tests and retests anything, he broadens his mind. But why stop—ever?

G. K. attacks Protestants because they take part of the Faith but not all. "Protestants are Catholics gone wrong. . . ." <sup>32</sup> It may have occurred to him that truth is always mixed with error in any human institution; it probably did not occur to him that the Church was a human institution. He disliked the Protestants continually arguing among themselves; he claimed the only thing on which they were united was their hatred of Catholics. Certainly this is unfair, and untrue.

He compared the Church to the "fountain" and Protestant denominations to the "pools"; or the Church as the source of water, and the other sects as various parts of the water. (Thus the Calvinists, for instance, take the Catholic idea of God's omniscience and elevate it to the doctrine of predestination—which G. K. abhors, saying that there is a vast difference between his choosing to go to the devil and God giving him to the devil without his having anything to say about it.) It occurred to him that the pools might be stagnant, but never that the source might be impure. He apparently did not feel that Paul's comment that "we know in part" applied to the Church as well as the individual, or that the Church was only an organization of fallible individuals. He did, in part, give up further chance for growth, I feel, when he became

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<sup>29</sup> *As I Was Saying*, Dodd, Mead & Company, 1936, p. 32.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>31</sup> *The Catholic Church and Conversion*, The Macmillan Company, 1950, p. 63.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.



convinced that the Church had all the truth, precluding further search.

His ability to see the other point of view often enabled Chesterton to defeat his opponents on their own ground. But when it came to his religion (in the narrow sense of the word) he was much more apt to be on the defensive than on the offensive. Quite often, it seems to me, he pointed out the foolishness of the attacker's argument without pointing out the good sense of his own. Thus, he may say Protestants foolishly attack Confession without understanding it, but he does not give us a positive reason why it is and ought to be practiced. To say that he cannot understand why one can accept the belief that the Creator became a carpenter and not accept the use of holy water does not tell us why he should accept both. Surely, if I thought Catholicism were everything G. K. believed it to be, I would join the Catholic Church. But I do not. Perhaps G. K. was too close to the Faith to see it clearly, but one can hardly call this too grave a fault, for the vast majority of us probably have the same problem.

#### IV

It hardly seems possible I can have come this far without mentioning Chesterton's incomparable writing style—his wit, wisdom and brilliant use of the paradox. G. K. used the paradox not to confuse but because so many of the world's truths are paradoxical. The same holds true for his wit; there was always a point behind it and usually a good one. He writes, "I never in my life said anything merely because I thought it funny; though of course, I have had the ordinary vain-glory, and may have thought it funny because I said it."<sup>33</sup>

Chesterton was perhaps one of the most versatile writers the world has ever known. As an essayist he was at his best; his essays were never dull though at times so clever it took all his reader's concentration to discover his meaning. Many of his books were actually collections of essays. As he tells us in his *Autobiography*: "I always have been and presumably always shall be a journalist. . . . I could not be a novelist; because I really like to see ideas or notions wrestling naked, as it were, and not dressed up in a masquerade as men and women."<sup>34</sup>

Anyone who places primary value on conciseness may not find Chesterton satisfactory, though he was good at epigrams. One gets the feeling he enjoyed writing and the words tumbled from his pen. There was so much to see, to do, to write about, that he was perpetually rushed;

<sup>33</sup> *Orthodoxy*, p. 17.

<sup>34</sup> Sheed & Ward, 1936, p. 298.

it is said he sometimes telephoned his essays into the *Daily News* office. In one of his books he apologizes for not having the leisure to be brief.

G. K. also tried his hand at poetry; some of it was quite good, some of it not so good. His light verse expresses well his *joie de vivre*; he was always attempting to communicate to others his delight in life. Take, for example:

I wish I were a jelly fish  
That cannot fall downstairs:  
Of all the things I wish to wish  
I wish I were a jelly fish  
That hasn't any cares,  
And doesn't have to wish  
"I wish I were a jelly fish  
That cannot fall downstairs." <sup>35</sup>

If this verse proves anything, it is that great minds are easily amused. It is only little minds that are easily bored.

It is odd that Chesterton was often accused of writing books from a Catholic viewpoint—i.e., of being a propagandist. As usual he had an answer. He very reasonably replied that if a man's religion wasn't reflected in what he wrote, it probably wasn't much of a religion. To say that a man has a religious viewpoint is only to say he has a viewpoint. A really objective thought does not exist. Freethinkers, as Chesterton delighted in pointing out, are occasionally thoughtful but never free.

No subject was too big for Chesterton to attempt. Thus we have *What's Wrong With the World?* in which he says that the first thing wrong with the world is that we do not realize what is right with it. We cannot change things unless we have a clearcut idea of what we do not want to change. One of the primary things wrong is that man is being replaced by the machine. If a soap factory cannot be run on the basis of brotherhood, he says, it is not the men but the soap that should be scrapped; for while a soapless society is not desirable, a society without brotherhood is not a society. We must, he continually proclaims, put first things first.

In *Tremendous Trifles* he puts forth the idea that the little things are important. In his excellent biographies of Shaw, Tolstoy, Browning, Stevenson, Thackeray, Chaucer, St. Francis, and St. Thomas Aquinas we see clearly what Chesterton values in a man. G. K. had definite views on a multitude of subjects.

<sup>35</sup> From *The Coloured Lands*, by G. K. Chesterton, p. 86. Published by Sheed & Ward, Inc., New York. Used by permission.

In *As I Was Saying* he discusses everything from woman's place (which is in the home) to the real necessity and joy of being able to lie in bed doing nothing and not feel guilty about it. At one point he staunchly defends the right of a person to be an individual; this was an important thing to him.

For I do not believe that any human being is fundamentally happier for being finally lost in a crowd, even if it is called a crowd of comrades. I do not believe that the humorous human vanities can have vanished quite so completely from anybody as that; I think every man must desire more or less to figure as a figure, and not merely as a moving landscape, even if it be a landscape made of figures. I cannot believe that men are quite so different that any of them want to be the same.<sup>36</sup>

Some of the most fascinating, really good detective stories that I have ever read were also written by this versatile author. The main character, Father Brown, is patterned after a friend who helped convert G. K., one Father John O'Connor. This priest (Brown) catches criminals in the most unorthodox, yet logical way—that is, by putting himself in their place. Father Brown, through whom Chesterton speaks, says:

"No man's really any good till he knows how bad he is, or might be; till he's realized exactly how much right he has to all this snobbery, and sneering, and talking about 'criminals,' as if they were apes in a forest ten thousand miles away; till he's got rid of all the dirty self-deception of talking about low types and deficient skulls; till he's squeezed out of his soul the last drop of the oil of the Pharisees; till his only hope is somehow or other to have captured one criminal, and kept him safe and sane under his own hat."<sup>37</sup>

In *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* G. K. explores the theme that suburbs ought to be glorified by romance and religion or else destroyed and that the main earthly business of a human being is to make his home and immediate surroundings as symbolic and significant as he can. Chesterton believed that nationality gave charm to the world, that each nation had enough to do keeping its own house in order. He would have the English proud to be English; indeed, to have a Londoner proud to be a Londoner. It is all part of his belief that in small groups men do not lose their individuality which is a part of their humanity. He detested the loneliness of millions in a crowd.

The final conversation between Adam Wayne, the poet, and Auberon Quin, the king, in this book which seems more like an extended essay, illustrates one of Chesterton's chief ideas, namely that love and laughter are both needed in this world.

<sup>36</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 173.

<sup>37</sup> *The Father Brown Omnibus*, Dodd, Mead & Company, 1935, p. 640.

"You and I, Auberon Quin, have both of us throughout our lives been again and again called mad. And we are mad. We are mad, because we are not two men but one man. We are mad, because we are two lobes of the same brain, and that brain has been cloven in two. . . . It is not merely that you, the humourist, have been in these dark days stripped of the joy of gravity. It is not merely that I, the fanatic, have had to grope without humour. . . ."

"Yet nothing can alter the antagonism—the fact that I laughed at these things and you adored them."

"I know of something that will alter that antagonism . . . something that you and I have all our lives perhaps taken too little account of. The equal and eternal human being sees no real antagonism between laughter and respect, the human being, the common man, whom mere geniuses like you and me can only worship like a god. When dark and dreary days come, you and I are necessary, the pure fanatic and the pure satirist. We have between us lifted the modern cities into that poetry which every one who knows mankind knows to be immeasurably more common than commonplace. But in healthy people there is no war between us. We are but the two lobes of the brain of a ploughman. Laughter and love are everywhere. . . . we have been too long separated; let us go out together. . . . For we are two essentials. Come, it is already day."<sup>38</sup>

As I near the end of this dissertation I realize that it is impossible ever to summarize a man like Chesterton and the inadequacy of my presentation seems all too apparent. But Chesterton was a big man—not only physically (for he was six feet two inches tall and weighed around 300 pounds) but also mentally. Just when I think I have reached the neck of this mental giant I look down and find myself only at his knee. I have not explored his opinions on the family, divorce, women, fairyland or a multitude of other similarly interesting topics. Nor have I delved into his very excellent biographies of well-known English poets, novelists, and the saints.

When Chesterton looked at the universe he was amazed that it existed, not that we could discuss its existence. This is how I feel when I look at him, for he is a small universe and I but a small mortal. It may be that I am representative of those who somehow think that great men are not as others and consequently are tempted to place them on pedestals. If I have done this here, perhaps it can be explained by the fact that I am a woman and G. K. says we women are peculiarly adapted to discipleship; or perhaps my youth and inexperience will explain it. If I have loved too much, I can only confess I have no regrets. For I do love this man who not only had the intelligence and persistence to seek out reality, but having found it, appreciated it.

<sup>38</sup> The Devin-Adair Company, 1950, pp. 199, 200. Used by permission.

## Book Reviews

**Religions: A Preliminary Historical and Theological Study.** By D. W. GUNDRY. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1958. xi-189 pp. \$4.50.

**Birth and Rebirth.** By MIRCEA ELIADE. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958. xv-175 pp. \$3.50.

At a first glance both of these books fall into that area of thought and research which used to be called "comparative religions." Nor is this first impression entirely misleading. Both books inhabit the same general area of intellectual interest, yet at the same time they differ enormously both in their ways of approaching their subject matter and in the purposes which dictate their literary form and content.

Mircea Eliade writes primarily as a scholar, D. W. Gundry primarily as a thinker. This does not mean of course that Eliade has no thought or Gundry no scholarship (very much to the contrary), but it does accurately describe the great differences in tone and intention which the two books display.

1. Gundry's book is really a first-class contribution to Christian apologetics. He is concerned to show how a convinced Christian can approach the whole world of non-Christian religion with reverence and sympathetic understanding, and the way in which Christianity can be received by the student of religion in general as the absolute religion in which the great questions examined and explored in the great religions find their decisive and satisfying answers. Thus the book concludes with a survey of Christianity, including a brief vindication of the author's own Anglicanism, and a plea for personal decision in the face of the religious challenge. "Our best plan," the author tells us, "is to renew our Christian allegiance by throwing ourselves into the life of the Church. . . . And we can try to bring into the Church, gradually and carefully, such features from other religions as will add to her riches" (p. 168). In these last two chapters there are many philosophical references, such as a comparison of a primarily scientific with a primarily religious outlook. The whole discussion is excellently conducted and the reader feels that he has been communing with a ripened and devoutly spiritual mind.

This reviewer's only substantial complaint about Gundry's book is that he seems to miss, or even deliberately to avoid, the extent to which we must say that the Bible is in some ways an antireligious book. In Scripture non-Biblical religion is usually referred to as idolatry, and there is certainly an enduring hostility toward all religious forms not based upon the active self-revelation of the living God through the prophets or through his Son. No sane person would suggest that this strand of Biblical thought should provide the only, still less the last, word of the Christian mind on the subject of religion in general, but at least it deserves to be treated with radical seriousness. Dogmatic antireligious and secularist movements have certainly been a marked feature of the Western civilization which has grown up under Christian influences, and we ought not to neglect the Biblical basis even of such manifestations as these. If we look honestly at human history we must agree that antireligious movements have had considerable justification; we may even come to interpret them as in their own way salutary prophetic protests.

It is good to demonstrate that the convinced Christian is not inhibited by the depth of his commitment from understanding and appreciating the spiritualities and

graces to be found in non-Christian religion, but it is important, if we stand in the Biblical tradition, to make it equally clear that true religion cannot be a man-made thing. It cannot even be made by the best and most manifestly inspired of men. There is a further dimension beside and beyond the dimension of mere religion, and it is this dimension which the Biblical Christian inhabits. It is the dimension of the gospel which redeems even religion. In this sphere the Christian thinker has to walk a veritable tightrope. The gospel is discontinuous with every human thing (Barthianism); and yet the gospel mercifully makes itself continuous with every human thing by redeeming it (Catholicism or Christian humanism). Everything needs redeeming; all things are fit for redemption. It is a mistake to suppose that only recognized sin needs redeeming. Religion needs redeeming just as much as irreligion; ethics needs redeeming just as much as wickedness. The Scripture concludes all under sin that it may conclude all under redemption.

2. Professor Eliade takes one particular subject, the almost universal prevalence in human culture of some form of initiatory rite and custom, and treats it in a way that is at once scholarly and interpretative. We find in his book not merely a collection of data but also a profound and insightful attempt to get, so to speak, under the skin of the data, and to discern the underlying meaning and purpose of initiation. The result is peculiarly satisfying both intellectually and spiritually.

The longing for rebirth, for a new mode of existence, a transfiguration of all that is, has many secular as well as religious expressions. Even communism shares it in its own way. Yet in fact the longing itself is always a religious one. The real substance of secular hope and culture is always some species of heavily disguised religion. Perhaps the most interesting portion of this book is the few closing pages on which Eliade discusses the way in which initiatory themes find expression in contemporary literature.

The difference between these two books is that between a broad general survey and a close scrutiny of one particular manifestation. There is ample room for both of these approaches, and each of the books before us may be welcomed and recommended for the excellent fashion in which it fulfills its author's chosen purpose.

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**The Gospel in Dispute: The Relation of the Christian Faith to Other Missionary Religions.** By EDMUND PERRY. New York: Doubleday & Company, 1958. 230 pp. \$3.95.

In *The Gospel in Dispute*, Edmund Perry has presented for American Christians a clear and perceptive account of the present world-wide confrontation of the Church and those missionary religions which today oppose it. He has incorporated into his material both an impressive range of knowledge and a sympathetic and sensitive understanding of the materials which form the body of that knowledge.

There are four faiths, in addition to Christianity, which today claim the same universality that we assume so often can only be claimed by the Gospel. These are Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. The first two are religions of the Biblical God; the latter most assuredly are not, and Buddhism is essentially atheistic. The first half of Dr. Perry's book is a consideration of the gospel, its essential content, and the method it demands for studying the non-Christian religions. We are called



to "enter the whole life of another faith-folk, espouse their ambitions and aspirations, subject ourselves to their needs and anxieties, and allow ourselves to be tempted, really tempted, by the claims of their faith," he writes. In the second half of the book, the method is amply demonstrated. Dr. Perry possesses the same qualities of charity and compassion for which he pleads.

*The Gospel in Dispute*, one of the volumes in Doubleday's Christian Faith Series of which Reinhold Niebuhr is the consulting editor, deserves the attention of any who are concerned with the life and thought of the Church beyond the single local congregation. To those who still hold an image of missionary activity as flinging out the banner, far and wide, it will help usher in some appreciation of Church and world, 1959 style. To those unaware of the psychological and spiritual cost which entrance into the Church demands of those converted from one of the great religions, it will serve as a reminder of the spiritual treasures which must be abandoned for the sake of the pearl of greatest price. To those who blithely assume that there is no doubt about the eventual triumph of the gospel everywhere, it strikes a note of warning. Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism: these *are* missionary religions. "The conflict into which we are entering is complicated and the stakes are high," Dr. Perry writes. "It is nothing less than a contest to decide whether the Christian faith . . . will command the opportunity to unite the peoples of the earth under its banners. The possibility of reconciling two or several of these traditional faiths in permanent co-existence is most unlikely."

Dr. Perry, in defining the nature of the faith now in dispute, will not please everybody. That faith is faith in the gospel *promise* of the Old Testament fulfilled in the *person* of Jesus who is the Christ, in whom Christians become the *people* of God in a new and unique way. This faith is Biblically centered and Biblically oriented. And the Christian apologetic which he by indirection assumes is therefore not an appeal either to reason or to experience on behalf of the Biblical faith but an appeal directly to the Biblical faith in its fullness of power. "The Gospel does not come as an answer to our questions; it comes demanding that we answer God's questions to us. It does not bring us answers; it brings us *the* question, 'God's question. God is the interrogator and we are on the witness stand.'"

The Biblical faith, then, is self-authenticating. The Christian's task is to understand it and to live it. It is not to point to any other source of authority and, from prior agreement about that authority, argue the truth of the reality to which the Biblical faith points.

Although some may hold a less pessimistic view of human reason, all will agree that "the Gospel will get a more friendly hearing . . . if we present ourselves as Christians simply and not as Christian Westerners." For, in theory, we have learned by now that Christ and culture are far different realities and that missionary activity demands a definite distinction between them. To state this, no matter how fully, is not to answer the real problem which the missionary confronts: "What ways of living, thinking, behaving, speaking do I possess that are not in some measure the product of the culture from which I come?" Language, thought patterns, emotions, all come from culture. Is it really possible to "de-culturize?" Certainly, this suggests the whole discussion of "demythologization," concerning which the last word has yet to be spoken.

To ask for a more complete treatment from Dr. Perry of this subject is to ask for something which *The Gospel in Dispute* does not set out to give. The book may be stronger on ideology than on practice, but that is not accidental. And if it

provokes us to go yet more thoroughly into the theology of mission, it surely achieves its purpose.

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**Foundations of the Responsible Society: A Comprehensive Survey of Christian Social Ethics.** By WALTER G. MUELDER. New York: Abingdon Press, 1959. 304 pp. \$6.00.

Beginning with an analysis of the background and meaning of "the idea of the responsible society" as this concept has developed within the ecumenical movement, Dr. Walter G. Muelder, dean and professor of social ethics at the Boston University School of Theology, examines the implications of this idea in relation to a wide range of contemporary social issues. That the author's primary interests lie in the fields of economics and politics is indicated by the following list of subjects to which he devotes separate chapters: the family, civil law, the state, the interrelationships of economics and politics, the welfare state, agricultural policy, work and vocation, management, consumption, social welfare, and the world community.

Only a relatively brief chapter (13 pages vs. an average of 19 pages) is allotted to a general discussion of the family. (An additional five pages in the section on agricultural policy are devoted to the farm family.) Problems relating to education and race relations are touched upon only incidentally in connection with discussions of other issues. No references to problems associated with the use of alcoholic beverages or with juvenile delinquency are given in the index. It is obvious that such arbitrary limitations and exclusions seriously qualify the "comprehensive" character of this "survey."

A further question concerning the adequacy of the present treatment of Christian social ethics is prompted by the title which Dean Muelder has used: *Foundations of the Responsible Society*. The author indicates in his "Introduction" (p. 8) that he has undertaken to deal with these foundations without engaging in "a theoretical analysis of Christian ethics, philosophical ethics, and their interrelationships." He reserves these topics for treatment in a later volume. The question persists, however, as to whether one can deal adequately with "the foundations of the responsible society" without giving considerably more attention to the Biblical and theological bases upon which the superstructure of this social order is built. One might present "a comprehensive survey of Christian social ethics" without such an analysis, but one cannot deal with the "foundations of the responsible society" without dealing with its *foundations*—i.e., with the roots and sources of the thought which give rise to the effort to achieve such a society and which also define the unique content which the idea of a responsible society has when it is used within the context of Christian faith.

But, despite the fact that *Foundations of the Responsible Society* is not as comprehensive as the subtitle suggests, and also despite the fact that one misses an analysis of the Biblical and theological bases of Christian social ethics, Dr. Muelder has written a very helpful and useful book. His major concerns, as already indicated, are with two of the most complex and consequential aspects of contemporary culture: economics and politics. He has performed a much-needed service by analyzing the most important issues in these areas with the aid of insights and tools drawn from the social scientists as well as from the theologians. The treatment of these issues is strikingly comprehensive in this sense. The chapters dealing with economic problems,

both agricultural and industrial, are especially valuable in this regard. Numerous footnotes and a ten-page bibliography provide helpful guides for further reading.

In summary, the present treatment of Christian social ethics needs to be supplemented by other discussions whose primary focus is upon the sources of this ethic; nevertheless, this volume should prove to be a valuable aid in bridging the gap between theological ethicists and laymen as well in providing an approach whereby theologians of different persuasions may be led to approach common cultural problems in a genuinely ecumenical spirit. Moreover, while other social issues ought not to be overlooked, *Foundations of the Responsible Society* represents a genuine contribution to the field of Christian social ethics by furnishing a comprehensive ethical analysis of the most important aspects of our economic and political life.

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**The Reality of the Church.** By CLAUDE WELCH. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958. 254 pp. \$3.95.

This book is an expansion of the James Sprunt Lectures at Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia, in February, 1958. Although described in the Preface as an "essay on the ontology of the church," it is much more. It touches on problems of Christology, the sacraments, the ministry and church discipline insofar as they are related to the total perspective. The study is not merely one more book of ecclesiological doctrine stimulated by contemporary ecumenical concern and discussion, even though the viewpoint was confessedly formulated in that context. It has in many respects an original quality; the author's handling of profound issues is exciting, creative and important.

Dr. Welch begins with a statement of the problem under the title, "The Enigma of the Church," and points out the ambiguities, even the contradictions, of the church as the faith-community and as an empirical institution. These paradoxes are manifest in a double tension, viz. (1) "how can this divided, faltering, sinful company be rightfully called a new creation, the bride cleansed, the community of the justified," etc.? (2) "How can this association of men, conformable apparently to the patterns of a multitude of other human associations, be rightfully described as the people of God, the colony of heaven," etc.?

But this problem, which is no new one and which confronts all sectors of Christendom, is similar to the contradiction of the individual Christian life, describable as both sinful and redeemed. An analogous duality is also discernible in the doctrine of the Incarnation, for "Jesus is not self-evidently the Christ" and never has been.

After a discussion of some current but unsatisfactory answers—e.g., the church is merely a voluntaristic association of individual believers, it is a "spiritual community" only, there is a distinction between the visible church and the invisible church or the "mystical body"—the author goes on to his statement of the nature of the being of the church, its ontology. This must begin with a consideration of the church as the responding people thoroughly conditioned by the social processes in which it participates. This fact, even the church's sinfulness, is part of its being and cannot be explained away, evaded, or what have you. "*This humanness of the believing community belongs to the ontology of the church.*" (Italics are the author's.) That is, our sinful divisions and the "nontheological factors" in Christian disunity are theological.

However, to speak of a responding community affirms an object to which response is given. "*Ecclesia* means both *convocatio* and *congregatio*." All that can be said about the sociality and historicity of the church must ultimately be referred to God. It is dependent for its past, present and future on its Lord, on the electing will of God who has constituted the church by his call. "All these features of the church's life [scriptures, sacraments and ministry] are to be seen as signs of the way God, in his infinite graciousness, adapts himself to the forms of our history." "The church is that lowly humanity and history to which and in which God condescends to be present in Jesus Christ. . . ."

In places, the author indulges in theological "brinkmanship" by coming near to denying the reality and meaning of history, in contradiction to his earlier strong affirmations: "the consummation [of the church] will not be the manifestation and glorification of a perfection already achieved in the church but radical cleansing and transformation." This would seem to avoid by the narrowest margin Newbigin's subordination of ontology to eschatology (*The Household of God*), a position which Dr. Welch explicitly excludes.

There is an incisive treatment of the problem of the relation of the church to the world, rejecting in passing as either tautological or false "*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*." The author's admitted dependence on Wingren for the development of the theme is evident. There will be apparent also, but without explicit reference, a parallel to the argument of F. D. Maurice's *The Kingdom of Christ* in that the church is "the sphere of *acknowledgement* of reconciliation and *acceptance* of Christ's Lordship" (of the world). Emphasis is the reviewer's. The church "is not in itself the realm of redemption or of the reign of Christ." Christ is Lord of the world or he is not Lord of anything, including the church.

There may be made two negative points: (1) The reviewer regrets the overworking of the adverb "precisely" (in one section, pp. 40-66, appearing *precisely* twelve times) and "rubric" used too often with a nontechnical, almost private, meaning. (2) Peculiar, perhaps significant, omission of reference (at least directly) to F. W. Dillistone's *The Structure of the Divine Society* and Daniel Jenkins' *The Strangeness of the Church*. J. R. Nelson's *The Realm of Redemption* gets a passing nod in a footnote (p. 166) and possibly the back of the hand on p. 104—"The church may best be described not as, in itself, the realm of redemption . . ."

Space does not allow a resumé of the argument of the book. It is hoped that the reader will be tempted to sample for himself the rich feast prepared by Dr. Welch.

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**Christians and the State.** By JOHN C. BENNETT. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958. xvii-302 pp. \$4.50.

**The State and the Church in a Free Society.** By A. VICTOR MURRAY. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1958. xiii-191 pp. \$4.50.

From each side of the Atlantic comes a book whose purpose it is to grapple with a subject which gives Protestants particular difficulty. The theological tradition which has influenced Protestants for the most part has been negative in its attitude toward the State. Augustine and Luther, especially, saw in the State the preserver of order, but not much more than that. The State could not be the agency by which men

could be made good, let alone righteous. These theologians looked upon the State as fundamentally a coercive regime, keeping order by physical force and threats, and in such a structure they could see little propriety or possibility of the ethics of love. The raw fact was for them man's irretrievable condition of sin, in addition to which men had constantly to be reminded that they are pilgrims and strangers in this world. Above all, men must avoid the final idolatry of looking to the State as the source of salvation or solution, in any deep sense, of their predicament.

But neither Dr. Bennett nor Dr. Murray want to accept this dark view, and are quite willing for the Continental theologians to retain a virtual monopoly of it. Dr. Murray argues that the modern State has changed fundamentally from the days when Augustine and Luther wrote: for them the State was an impersonal power far removed from the people, whereas today it resembles more and more a large family comprised of the whole society. The State, in this view, is not a monstrous power but the mechanism by which a people, like a large family, orders itself. Dr. Murray illustrates this new version of the State by calling attention to the mood and mode of Parliament's work, with its earthly and human concerns. He asks what even such a recent figure of history as Gladstone "would have thought of Parliament in our time discussing the price of cheese and the quality of beer."

Having only the other day sat in the Gallery of the House of Commons, this reviewer also was struck by this sense of closeness between rulers and ruled and by the deep moral concern in the debate over race-horse betting. But the next day the line of debate shifted when the Opposition, asked to approve the Anglo-Egyptian financial settlement, vigorously demanded to know who planned, approved and triggered the frightful military attack upon Egypt. Here was, once again, not the happy close family but the aggressive expression of naked violence. Dr. Murray is, of course, quite familiar with this demonic thrust of individual and collective egotism, for he has much to say about the unhappy history of Christian racialism in South Africa. But he wants to argue that it is precisely the sinful follies of men that should lead the Church into the arena of public life in order to mitigate the enormities of collective sin.

Dr. Bennett also makes much of the way both men and nations constantly insinuate their self-interest into their "good" deeds. But he rightly emphasizes that man's constant condition of sinfulness must not mean the abandonment of the State to only one function, to prevent anarchy. There are several types and levels of order and the State can be the instrument of their achievement: "We should not," he writes, "on doctrinaire grounds, theological or political, deny the state the possibility of its being the agent of a sensitive caring for the welfare and the dignity of all its citizens . . ." (p. 62). In spite of the danger that the State, if it spreads its activities too far, may seek to determine the moral and spiritual goals of society, Dr. Bennett believes that the danger does not "cancel the responsibility of the state for the external conditions for the welfare of all the people" (p. 63).

Both authors are acutely aware of the unique dilemma Protestantism finds itself in today in the realm of social thought, for over against its own tentative, ambiguous and chiefly critical perspective there are three formidable movements claiming the minds of this generation and shaping its events. Communism and Catholicism provide, each in its own way, a doctrine of natural law as the basis for interpreting and re-creating the structure of society. The intellectual security provided by these conceptions of an absolute key to truth is rivaled only by the secular utilitarianism



which motivates those for whom Marxist dialectics and theological natural law represent far too complicated an approach to what is essentially a matter of day-to-day deliberation and solution, and by whom it is held that there are many, not just one, goals for human society. Having been unable to come to terms openly with the doctrine of natural law and having dug in against the particularly destructive ethics of self-interest, Protestantism is left with only one distinctive principle, which is criticism. This is surely the safest position, but it does not represent any clearly defined social theory around which a creative policy can be formed. This is the lack both Dr. Bennett and Dr. Murray are concerned about. They do not argue that Protestantism must develop a more creative social and political theory *only* because of the encroachments of competitive ideologies, but for the *positive* reason that the Protestant faith inherently requires it.

Although neither book provides an outline for such a Protestant social teaching, they are both excellent discussions of the many specific problems which cluster about this dominant theme. Dr. Murray's book represents his Hibbert Lectures for 1957 and is packed with practical and concrete examples taken chiefly from the political and social life of England and the Commonwealth. Dr. Bennett's book is a more rigorously argued presentation and is much broader in scope, dealing in more detail with these problems and providing a more sustained treatment of the difficulties encountered at the particular points where Christians and the State meet.

SAMUEL ENOCH STUMPF

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**Christianity in a Revolutionary Age, A History of Christianity in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Volume I: The Nineteenth Century in Europe, Background and Roman Catholic Phase.** By KENNETH SCOTT LATOURETTE. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958. xiv-498 pp. \$6.00.

Though this first volume in a new major historical series of five volumes on modern and contemporary Christian history is among the first fruits of Professor Latourette's retirement, it indicates that this work will perhaps be his best. In it, for example, he has escaped from the methodological rigor which set the events of *A History of the Expansion of Christianity* into tidal waves of advance and recession and gave to every volume in that series the same pattern, emphasizing, to the superficial reader at least, the author's concept of the structure of history rather than the events of history itself. Though the pattern of that earlier work is repeated by way of review and setting in chapter two of this volume, it is in no way continued in the ensuing narrative. Instead, the author delineates the social, political, and ideational background of the nineteenth century and then proceeds to depict the history in Europe of the Roman Catholic Church during that period. The history is presented topically rather than chronologically, which of necessity entails some overlapping and repetition, i.e., chapters four, seven, and nine.

Chapters one through three are prolegomena to the study. "Origins and Basic Questions," for example, would apply to any study of Christianity, not just a treatment of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Chapter three is a rapid survey of all phases of Christianity in the eighteenth century, interesting but not essential to the work at hand. Indeed, the first three chapters might conveniently have been reduced



to a short introduction taken altogether from the contents of chapter three. Chapters one and two are altogether superfluous.

The work really begins with chapter four. This chapter deals with the outward effects of revolution on the Church—the effects, various and even diverse, on the different ecclesiastical denominations, the curtailment and impairment of Roman Catholicism in France and other Western European countries in contrast to new opportunities for Protestantism in Germany and the United States. Chapter five discusses the various expressions the revolution took: political, economic, scientific, etc.; it abounds in generalization and lacks the richness of concrete detail which characterizes chapter four. Chapter six is no more than a two-and-one-half-page preview of the remaining chapters and is unnecessary. Chapter seven, in contrast, is a masterful, almost overpowering survey of the papacy from 1800 to 1914 and is without doubt the ablest chapter in the book. Professor Latourette is far more adept at the delineation of the outward course of historical events than of the inward history of thought.

Chapter eight is a useful history of the major orders, old in terms of their revival, new in terms of their establishment and accomplishments in the nineteenth century; while chapter nine deals with worship and the religious practices of the Roman Catholic communicants, an adequate discussion of what took place but lacking in an appreciative interpretation of it. However, chapter ten, especially in its treatment of Loisy and Tyrrell, is sympathetic, almost tender.

The country-by-country treatment of what took place in Roman Catholicism during this period (chapter eleven) is thorough and compares favorably with chapter seven as forming the best part of the book. But the very nature of chapter twelve, since there was scarcely any missionary activity in Europe at this time, makes it no more than a statement, while chapter thirteen is just a summary of what has already been said.

There is no doubt in my mind that the style and structure of the book could have been greatly improved by removing the jerks and breaks occasioned by such chapters as these which are hardly more than editorial comments on the narrative of events. However, the work as a whole is admirable, illustrating the best in American historical scholarship. Professor Latourette is the most prolific writer in the history of Christianity of our generation. At the same time, because of his exhaustive research, encyclopedic erudition, and judicious appraisals, he is one of the great historians of the modern Church. This book is among the best and most appreciative interpretations of Roman Catholicism in the nineteenth century ever written by a Protestant. And Professor Latourette is a Baptist at that!

WILLIAM R. CANNON

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**The Surge of Piety in America.** By A. ROY ECKARDT. New York: Association Press, 1958. 192 pp. \$3.50.

**Popular Religion: Inspirational Books in America.** By LOUIS SCHNEIDER and SANFORD M. DORNBUSCH. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958. xi-174 pp. \$4.50.

For more than a decade students of society and theology have been attempting to fathom the meaning of the so-called "turn to religion." The most recent of such

attempts are the studies of three college professors whose books are a valuable addition to the understanding of contemporary religion in America. The first is by the Head of the Department of Religion at Lehigh University. He feels the current interest in religion does not necessarily constitute an abiding change. This "surge of piety" is seen as reflecting the desire for individual security and social solidarity—the values of what he calls "folk religion."

The leaders of this faith are many. Billy Graham reflects the values of folk religion in his concern for the national welfare. Norman Vincent Peale reveals them in his gospel of success and adjustment. Others serve the interest of folk religion by identifying the ethics of *laissez-faire* capitalism with Christian teaching. Each of these leaders of popular religion is examined critically and found wanting. Each, from the broadest Christian perspective, is shown as ironically failing to fulfill his claims. The book moves relentlessly forward in strict logical progression to the final chapter which contains a magnificent demonstration of the limitation of all folk religion—namely, that the final center of all value is God rather than man.

This scholarly little book is organized in an orderly fashion by one whose own theological convictions become dominant as the work develops. It is a critical work but even those who bear the brunt of its criticism cannot help feeling that it is done in a spirit of sincerity and kindliness. Not everyone in the secular world will agree with its theological conclusion, yet most will find it a stimulating and penetrating analysis of modern popular religion.

In the Schneider and Dornbusch volume there is an entirely different type of intellectual atmosphere. Whereas Eckardt uses critical reasoning, this book is the product of contemporary quantitative methods in sociology. Schneider, professor of Sociology at Purdue, and Dornbusch, a sociologist at the University of Washington, have analyzed forty-six popular religious books written in America over the past eighty years. They are concerned with discovering the values which are proclaimed by men like Russell Conwell, Harry Emerson Fosdick, Fulton Sheen, and Norman Vincent Peale. All are subjected to what is called the method of "content analysis." Briefly, a number of traits in the books are selected, such ideas as "you can change yourself by religious means," "keep affirming the positive," "life has meaning." Each of these ideas is assigned a simple arithmetical value. Each book is first analyzed paragraph by paragraph. It is then read as a whole and finally scored for all of the categories on a four-point scale.

The result is several informative chapters on the character and cycles of popular religion. We learn there have been surges and declines in types of interest, but when one looks at the books as a whole, mundane, earthly values have had a striking consistency as goals of popular aspiration.

One is struck by the thoroughness with which the subject has been examined, by the careful use of references, by the excellent sociological orientation of the authors, and by the genuinely readable quality of the text as a whole. However, when one studies the method he may be led to question its arbitrariness. Can one measure religious aspiration by statistics? But granting the validity of this criticism, perhaps the burden is placed upon the critic to suggest a better methodology. However crude the method—and the authors are well aware of its limitations—we do have here a sincere attempt on the part of two young scientists to bring us a step closer to understanding mass values. The study is not to be thought of as definitive so much as it is suggestive. From this point of view the authors have succeeded admirably.

Although these two books are different from one another, both, through different

disciplines, underline a similar point of view: that popular religion is anthropocentric rather than theocentric in character. The implication of this conclusion may well give us pause!

G. NORMAN EDDY

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**Horace Bushnell: Minister to a Changing America.** By BARBARA M. CROSS.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958. xv-201 pp. \$6.00.

**Jonathan Edwards the Preacher.** By RALPH G. TURNBULL. Grand Rapids:

Baker Book House, 1958. 192 pp. \$3.95.

These two volumes, each concerned with an eminent New England divine, are as different as the men studied, Edwards and Bushnell. They are also as different as the houses which published them. The first is a scholarly work. The book jacket tells us that Mrs. Cross received her Ph.D. from Radcliffe College in 1956, and in her "Acknowledgments" she speaks warmly of Professors Oscar Handlin and Perry Miller of Harvard. These hints indicate the background and atmosphere of her labor, and the reader who anticipates the thoroughness and objectivity of competent scholarship will not be disappointed.

Mrs. Cross sets out "to analyze the religious thought of Horace Bushnell and the emergence of his theology from his society and tradition." This is a lofty ambition for 168 pages and doubtless the technical expert will find distressing omissions. However, the evidence of careful work and wide familiarity with the period inspires confidence in the ordinary reader. It is particularly refreshing to read an account of a man's theology which is free of a reverential attitude and which rests on such sensitive awareness of the social pressures behind the man. However, it may be asked if we have a full picture of the development of a man's thought when we know so little about the strictly personal pressures of his life.

Mrs. Cross deftly sketches the burden of the thought of others who influenced Bushnell or who were in turn influenced by him. She is at her best in relating this type of interaction. Her summary of the Unitarian protest is alarming because it reveals how thoroughly contemporary middle-class Protestantism has been saturated by that heresy. Mrs. Cross, in good academic fashion, seems to stand aloof, and yet one feels that she would contend that Bushnell won his struggle to "find and hold Christian truth for himself and his contemporaries."

The extensive incorporation of direct quotations slows down an otherwise free writing style and the casual reader may grow weary with Mrs. Cross's well-doing. But even the casual reader, especially if he knows Bushnell only as the author of *Christian Nurture* or the promoter of a Hartford park, should persevere to the end and then turn to Bushnell's own volumes.

Mr. Turnbull serves a less academic purpose in his book on Jonathan Edwards. He does not propose a formal biography but seeks to present Edwards as the preacher. Perhaps he has been troubled by the number of otherwise well-informed people who feel that Edwards' principal contribution to Christian culture was his sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." It is always refreshing to see the surprise such persons express when they hear reputable historians speak of Edwards as one of the greatest thinkers the New World has yet produced. However highly Edwards may be esteemed as a philosopher or theologian, there are still many who dismiss him lightly

as a preacher. Mr. Turnbull wishes to share with his readers his own long-established appreciation of Edwards as a preacher. It is a pity that he is not content simply to help Mr. Edwards preach to us. He continually interrupts Edwards to do a little preaching of his own.

Although he is well acquainted with the sources, Mr. Turnbull scarcely approaches Edwards with the objectivity which characterizes Mrs. Cross's approach to Bushnell. But his purpose differs from Mrs. Cross's, and he produces a book of considerable warmth and practical helpfulness to the preacher. The "Analysis of Selected Sermons" in the Appendix will be of especial interest to the parish minister. The experts in the history of American thought will have little room for this book on their shelves, but the preacher will find it instructive and interesting.

It is good to find a busy contemporary minister (Mr. Turnbull is minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Seattle) who makes time to study and write. If some other minister reading this book is moved to turn more frequently to his study, letting some organizations stumble along without him, Mr. Turnbull's example may help restore some of the influence which the pulpit had in Edwards' day.

BROWNE BARR

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**The Restoration of Meaning to Contemporary Life.** By PAUL ELMEN. Christian Faith Series. Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1958. 194 pp. \$3.95.

We moderns no longer believe in Satan, but all the same we are on the brink of being done in by him. For our hearts have been emptied by "the insufferable inane," and this is, says Professor Elmen, a "synonym for Satan" (p. 83). With great skill Professor Elmen contrasts our ideal—the hearty, outdoor, go-getting optimism of Teddy Roosevelt—with the realities of our spiritual state. Not too far beneath the surface of our apparent well-being, he finds the horror of "the dragon's folded tail." Relying heavily and effectively upon literary illustrations, the author describes such conditions as ennui, boredom, horror. "Boredom becomes horror when it is conscious of itself" (p. 78). No reader is likely to accuse Professor Elmen of taking "horror" lightly. In spite of this, however, he sees that there is something even worse: that boredom which has so far advanced towards hopelessness that it does not even recognize itself. "The man who is deeply bored and does not know it has lost his humanity" (p. 45).

At one point the author reminds us of the terror of the Nazi concentration camps. Then he says, "The Exurbanite who drives through the hills of Connecticut in his Volkswagen may find such a view theatrical or morbid" (p. 100). One can predict this reaction towards much that is in the book, or rather towards the mounting insistence that our comfortable suburban existence is often empty and boring. The truth is that the Exurbanite is often well read in books about Exurbanites, of which there are enough to hide many hours of boredom. Not so long ago it was fashionable to repeat the charges of boredom made against one's own circle. Now, perhaps, we have moved on to the next stage, which is to cast a look of profound pity upon anyone who seems concerned for the boredom of contemporary life. Have we become bored with the vision of our boredom?

One difficulty with any book on this topic is that it is so hard to generalize

from the evidence of the poets and psychoanalysts to the condition of "everyman." For boredom, as well as faith, are conditions of the soul not open to casual observation. Who knows? The Exurbanite who drives a Volkswagen to the Connecticut towns may be a saint! In books about this subject there are two dangers equally to be avoided: assuming the viewpoint of omniscience, and brushing aside the diagnosis (there are now many standard, clever ways of doing this) without looking within at the testimony of one's own spiritual life.

Professor Elmen wrote his book, however, not merely to depict boredom. In Part III he describes the resources of the Christian faith for restoring meaning to our lives. Briefly, he concentrates upon the concept of God's "Glory," for it is in the discovery of something truly full of glory that life takes on deep meaning. His treatment of this concept is a high point of the book.

At one point the author asks if there is any "evidence" of God's presence (p. 129). But he does not give "evidence." He shows the renewal of life which characterize those "who already believe" (p. 134). In a sense, the lives of the saints are the best evidence when we are talking about the power of Christianity to restore meaning to life. Thus, it would be a mistake to look to this book for any "proofs" in the traditional sense. But I hope many readers will look to this book for a vivid sense of the relevance of Christianity to our present condition.

FRED BERTHOLD

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**Theology and Modern Literature.** By AMOS N. WILDER. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958. x-145 pp. \$3.00.

"I believe," says Professor Wilder in his foreword, "that all imaginative creations from the oldest myth and ritual to the most recent poem have their own kind of declarative or cognitive role, offer 'news of reality!'" This general standpoint is a useful corrective to theories of literature which would reduce it either to mere expression of feelings or still further to art for art's sake. Still more valuably, Dr. Wilder's standpoint allows him to see that an author's systematic views may be at odds with the formal theology of a church, and yet (as many theologians realize) his imaginative creations deeply correspond with the religious insights of Christianity. "The modern agnostic writer is often unconsciously appealing to a living religious tradition against one that is moribund, and he has often not discovered that important elements in the church today agree with him."

Dr. Wilder begins therefore with a survey of a number of writers whose main motifs are in fact recognizably Christian, and of some theological critics who recognize not only this fact but also the literary and artistic element in religion itself. Within this general framework his sympathies lie chiefly with the main themes of Calvinist or Orthodox Protestantism. Liberal Christians like H. J. C. Grierson or Gilbert Murray are lightly, all too lightly, dismissed as illustrations of "humanistic prejudice." Catholic Christians and Thomists fare somewhat better; but in so far as they shelter under the umbrella of Aquinas, it is inept to suggest that they rely too much on the authority of Aristotle, whose *Poetics* was known to the saint only in a rough Latin translation of a loose Arabic adaptation of a Syriac version.

The meat of the book is however the analyses of Robinson Jeffers and William Faulkner (both presbyterians with a small "p") and these are excellent whether as criticism or as Christianity. They whet the appetite for more, for equally incisive



essays on the Nonconformist novels of Joyce Cary and the Biblical Masques of Robert Frost; on Dorothy Sayers and Medieval Drama. For, as Professor Wilder justly remarks on the phrase, "*Teste David cum Sibylla*," from the *Dies Irae*: "The muses sacred and profane agree . . . The common witness of David and the Sibyl is directed to the signs of the times and of an apocalyptic time."

T. S. K. SCOTT-CRAIG

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**Critique of Religion and Philosophy.** By WALTER KAUFMANN. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958. xviii-325 pp. \$5.00.

There are various ways in which the religious interpretation of life may be attacked. One is found in Mr. Bertrand Russell's *Why I Am Not a Christian*; here ignorance of the subject, coupled with cleverness and superficiality, give the reader the impression that the author has hardly bothered to do more than deliver himself of snide comments and cheap witticisms. But another way is taken by Mr. Kaufmann in the book under review. Here an obvious attempt has been made to understand what he is discussing, there is at least some sympathy with the religious, and even the specifically Christian, point of view; we gain the impression that the author is at least deeply concerned to be as fair as he can be to a position which he cannot accept. This is all to the good. But it is not the same as saying that Mr. Kaufmann has written either an important or a disturbing book.

His book is not important because it is altogether too scrappy, too filled with disconnected observations on this and that, too unwilling to follow through with his arguments; it is not disturbing because it is quite clear that Mr. Kaufmann has taken, perhaps through no fault of his own, a very limited and partial view of the religious understanding of existence. He quotes "big" names—e.g., Paul Tillich—and then appears to think that he can effectively demolish them (in this case, for instance, he concentrates on Tillich's view of symbol, which he hardly treats with the seriousness it deserves) in perhaps half a dozen pages. Hence the book, despite its length, seems to be a compilation of occasional essays, snippets from reviews and essays, even a piece of amusing dialogue in some conversations with Satan. In the same number of pages, a much more detailed and reasoned case might have been made; and it is plain enough that Mr. Kaufmann himself could do it. As it stands, the religious man will admit that here and there the author has made a telling point; but the *total* effect is not up to the particular impression of this and that paragraph or page.

What it all comes to—and in a brief review it is not possible to examine section after section—is that Mr. Kaufmann thinks that religion has at least this much truth: it speaks for man's aspiration, his desire for, and his capacity for somehow achieving, what one might call a transcendence of the meanness and senselessness of life. At the same time, Mr. Kaufmann believes that religions generally, and Christianity perhaps especially, have not exposed themselves to that careful examination by the critical reason which would save them from absurdity, pretentious claims, overweening pride. Certainly this *has* been true and in some quarters still is; and Mr. Kaufmann is right when he tells us that "ultimate convictions," whatever they may be, "can be responsible or irresponsible," and that when "they are irresponsible they are arbitrary and blind." Perhaps that is the lesson of this otherwise not very impressive "critique"; it is an admonition to us all to be both reverent *and* responsible, convinced *and* liberal-minded, religious *and* reasonable. And whatever else may be said, Mr.



Kaufmann himself is respectful where he disagrees and never cheap, vulgar, or superficially clever.

W. NORMAN PITTENGER

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**Christ in the New Testament.** By CHARLES M. LAYMON. New York: Abingdon Press, 1958. 256 pp. \$3.50.

There is a renewed interest in Christology. This is a recognition of the centrality of Christology to all Christian theology. For the Christian, theology proper is the outgrowth of the study of him who has revealed God to man. All related themes, too, find their Christian source in him. Eloquent witness is borne to this in the fact that the ecumenical struggle to understand the nature of the church and its unity has forced the participants back to a restudy of Christology. The church must be understood in the light of him who is its Lord.

To a recent work on this subject by Oscar Cullmann on the continent, and one by Vincent Taylor in Britain, it is fitting that an American volume should be added at almost the same time. The book is delightfully written, clear and comprehensible in style, pleasing in format, logical in structure, well unified by summaries at the end of the various chapters, crowned by a valuable summation of the whole in the last chapter, and well indexed, both by Scripture passages and subject matter, with a good bibliography.

The book is concerned with the portrait of Jesus set forth in the New Testament, in its development from the primitive preaching of the church to the close of the period from which our canonical books come. Its conviction is that all the writers were concerned with the historical Jesus, but that they interpreted his significance in various and ever-developing ways, as their experience with him grew. Christ is not only what he appeared to be in his earthly life, but also what he became in the ongoing experience of the church. The various elements contributed to the portrait of Christ were the result of the individuality of the different writers, the thought world in which they moved, and the problems which arose in the life of the church. The variety, however, may be drawn together into a unity. There are not many Christs in the New Testament—only one. But his full glory can be seen only as all the variety of statements about him is examined.

The tone of the book is sanely critical, fair in handling differences, and moderate in its conclusions. The Christ here presented is the Christ of the classic Christian faith. The one hesitancy the reviewer felt about the book is its tendency to grant more to the experience and thought processes of the early church than to direct revelation in the formulation of New Testament Christology. There were other views of Jesus which developed out of experience and reason quite at variance with New Testament views. Are we not finally cast back upon direct revelation as the ultimate source of the church's Christology?

This work covers much of the ground being currently discussed in the field of New Testament, and would make a good textbook. It is a stimulating study worthy of careful consideration, one which is abreast of the latest scholarship and will serve as a guide to further study by those who read it.

DONALD G. MILLER

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**The Witnessing Community.** By SUZANNE DE DIETRICH. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958. 180 pp. \$3.75.

This volume is a revision of lectures delivered at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond by Miss Suzanne de Dietrich, considered by many the outstanding lay theologian in Europe; she was for nearly two decades lecturer on Bible study in the World Council's Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, Switzerland.

The scope of these lectures is indicated in the subtitle: "The Biblical Record of God's Purpose." The author has attempted to sketch the history of God's People over a span of about two thousand years. She believes that it is a part of the calling of the church to show the world what true community means: "a fellowship of free persons bound to one another by a common calling and a common service" (p. 13). Only in Christ can the tension between freedom and authority, between the right of the individual person to attain fullness of life and the claim of the community as a whole on each of its members be resolved. God's People are expected to manifest this work of reconciliation in word and deed; each generation of his People is called upon to rethink this vocation.

The body of Miss de Dietrich's presentation is essentially an outline of Biblical theology: election, covenant, Torah as charter, the permanent problem of assimilation versus separation, prophecy as the channel of God's revelation to his People and the prophetic view of history, the doctrine of the remnant and, in the fullness of time, the Messianic community and "the great proclamation: Christ is Lord." Finally she reminds the church, which stands "between the times," of its clear vocation.

Miss de Dietrich has presented a Christocentric interpretation throughout. She has found in the Old Testament a basis for the New Testament revelation regarding Jesus as the Christ. Impressive and profound insights into the biblical account (the obvious result of years of devoted study) and the ability to find the permanent meaning of many biblical events are major values of this book. But some will raise questions as to the way in which the author approaches the record (the jacket claims that it is through "the scientific methods of biblical theology").

Proponents of the thesis that the Bible presents a body of witnesses to God's purpose, a faithful succession, run the great danger of seeing the Biblical text all on one level, and of imposing upon Biblical personalities and events a unity which denies diversity. References are sometimes made without careful attention to provenance. What will such Biblical theologians do with Isa. 63:1-6 or the Book of Esther? How will they reconcile the nearly contemporary Biblical records of universalism in Jonah and Ruth with the nationalistic exclusivism of Ezra (cf. pp. 128, 129)? When confronted with diverse attitudes and doctrines within a particular period in the Biblical record, is it necessary to become selective in order clearly to see God's purpose? And if so, what is to be the basis for selection?

Other questions come to the fore. Is it a slight overstatement to suggest that the Hebrews have "contributed little to the general culture of the ancient world" (p. 27)? Hasn't the time come when the Christian community should be a little slower in leveling charges so freely at the Pharisees (p. 130)? What of the Pharisaic authors of certain psalms, and of Gamaliel? Isn't it possible that the early church included many former Pharisees? Did Jesus perhaps speak sharply to the Pharisees, not because he thought them hopeless, but because he recognized their potential?

The author has probed the deepest questions of religion. The reader cannot escape her skillful portrayal of a God of mercy and grace who has given freely, even

himself, to mankind. His saving purpose for man and society can be made known to this generation in its own circumstances by the "witnessing community."

HARRELL F. BECK

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Boston, Massachusetts.

**Man, Morals and History.** By CHESTER C. McCOWN. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958. xvii-350 pp. \$5.00.

As Professor Chester C. McCown died on January 11, 1958, this book, on which he was working at the time of his death, turns out to be his last literary achievement. One does not hesitate to rank C. C. McCown in the front ranks of the scholars of his generation; and his time was one which produced many famous scholars. His training in graduate scholarship was received under Shirley Jackson Case at the University of Chicago, and all of his writings show the results of that training. The last generation produced no more competent and fruitful scholar than Professor Case, and no student has shown himself more worthy of his great teacher than Dr. McCown.

Dr. McCown was trained to be a New Testament scholar; and throughout his professional career he worked in that field. Yet he did not hesitate to range widely over the entire area of Biblical studies, with a particular interest in archeology. Indeed, scholars in the field know that Dr. McCown was one of the best archeologists of his time. He once served as director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem; and he did a considerable amount of excavation. What distinguished him most was his extraordinary grasp of the meaning of archeological materials. In his ability to interpret the results of excavations, to bring to life the world which was reflected by them, he had hardly a peer. Moreover, he was not satisfied merely to work the field of Biblical archeology. Within the range of his interests he included all that was known, not only of the history of man on the earth, but of the planet itself, and beyond that to the origins of the universe.

The present work is an excellent illustration and documentation of the above remarks. Here Dr. McCown has attempted "to exhibit in outline developing moral and religious values that can be discovered in history," and "thus to present in concrete profile the nature of progress, and the meaning of the historical process." At the same time, this is not a theological treatise, but "a historical sketch of human achievement." Nor is the work sectarian in any sense. "While," he says, "it is written in the language of theism, it may serve the humanist or agnostic. What matters is the recognition of order, meaning and purpose in the universe." He has directed his interest mainly to the history reflected in the Bible. Here he finds evidence for his optimistic faith.

Dr. McCown was a liberal scholar, and wrote down his views with courage. He finds no clear monotheism among the Hebrews until the prophet Amos. Before that was polytheism or henotheism. He is aware of the indebtedness of the Hebrews to all their surrounding cultures. Yet there was a uniqueness in Hebrew life and thought which set them apart from all others. This became the basis of their contribution to the culture of mankind. Jesus represented the full prophetic meaning of Biblical religion once more, but in Paul Dr. McCown sees a retrogression in ethical standards. He describes the land itself with such accuracy and beauty of style as only one who loved Palestine deeply could attain.

S. VERNON McCASLAND

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**The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity.** By HANS JONAS. Boston: The Beacon Press, 1958. xviii-302 pp. \$6.00.

An immense literature has already grown up around the Qumrān Scrolls since their recent discovery, and the public at large has shown an amazing interest in their significance for our understanding of the background and the early history of Christianity. Professor Jonas' book on the Gnostic Religion and the origins of Christianity is the first of its kind in the English language. It will be welcomed by scholars and by many other readers besides.

In his introductory chapter the author presents an excellent synopsis of the four stages of Greek culture. These were: "Before Alexander, the classical phase as a national culture; after Alexander, Hellenism as a cosmopolitan secular culture; third, Hellenism as a pagan religious culture; and, fourth, Byzantinism as a Greek Christian culture." He shows how the Greek spirit exerted its influence on the thought of the East and eventually produced two kinds of tradition, one public, the other esoteric. The intermingling of Western and Eastern ideas in Hellenism produced a syncretism of mystery religions and oriental mythologies on the one hand and Jewish and Christian eschatology on the other. Professor Jonas is convinced that nonetheless a "novel principle" can be discerned, and that this new principle is most conspicuous in so-called "Gnosticism."

In the first part of his book the author explains the literature and the symbolic language of the Gnostics. He uses sources from both inside and outside the Christian orbit. This material has been increasing steadily for the last decade, and the Manichaean papyri found in 1930 in Egypt are perhaps just as important, though not as dramatically impressive, as the DSS and the story of their discovery.

Professor Jonas explains in a very convincing way that one of the main features of the heretic Christian as well as the pagan variety of Gnosticism is "the radical dualism that governs the relation of God and world, and correspondingly that of man and world." One common feature of all Gnosticism is the use of the word "knowledge" in contradistinction to the Christian use of "faith" and the classical idea of "natural reason." Gnostic knowledge is by and large salvation-knowledge, i.e. knowledge of God the Unknowable.

The second part of the book describes the major systems of Gnostic thought. There are abounding references to the sources.

Adolf von Harnack, whose profound book on Marcion is a classic, did not reckon Marcion among the Gnostics. Jonas does. Now, contrary to other Christian Gnostics of his time, Marcion felt rightly that the story of Christ's Passion was fundamentally important; furthermore, he rejected the entire Old Testament on account of its pitiless and cruel image of the Creator and demanded that the Church should ignore it. In this context Harnack made a very interesting observation, and it is a pity that Professor Jonas fails to discuss it. "To reject the Old Testament," wrote Harnack, "was a mistake in the second century and the Church was right in condemning Marcion's suggestion. To retain the Old Testament in the 16th century was a fated attitude which the Reformation was not at that time able to avoid. But that the Old Testament has been retained in Protestantism as a canonical document since the nineteenth century is the result of religious and ecclesiastical paralysis." (Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom fremden Gott*, Leipzig 1924, p. 217.) This statement by so eminent a theologian as Harnack makes it appear

quite possible that Marcion's attitude toward the Old Testament may once again in the future find adherents among Protestants.

In the third and last part of the book the author confronts Gnosticism with the classical mind. Because his evaluation and ideas are unusually enlightening, this reviewer feels definitely that a similar chapter should have been added on the differences and similarities between Gnosticism and Primitive Christianity. The author has a deep understanding of all the varieties of Gnostic religion and he might have drawn attention to such basic differences as the cosmology of the Gnostics and the lack of a cosmology in both the New and the Old Testaments; to the conception of time in Primitive Christianity and the lack of it in every form of Gnosticism and, last but not least, to the differences between the eschatology of the New Testament and the mystical eschatology of the Gnostics.

MARIA FUERTH SULZBACH, Ph.D.

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**The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Living Church.** By CARL G. HOWIE. Richmond: John Knox Press, 1958. 128 pp. \$2.50.

**The Crucial Task of Theology.** By E. ASHBY JOHNSON. Richmond: John Knox Press, 1958. 222 pp. \$5.00.

**Preaching on Christian Unity.** Ed. by ROBERT TOBIAS. St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1958. 160 pp. \$3.00.

1. Sharing with his professor, Dr. W. F. Albright, the first news of the most amazing event in recent Biblical scholarship, Carl Howie differed from certain extreme views not warranted by the facts. Here is his own book. "The two movements are about as different as they could have been, given the fact that both came out of a common cultural and historical background." The Qumrân community (125-31 B.C. and A.D. 6-68) considered itself the purified Remnant, meditating on the Law day and night (in literal interpretation of the Scripture).

Eleven caves have produced manuscripts, including, most recently, an authentic copy of Leviticus. Dr. Howie lists these discoveries; discusses the Essene influence on John the Baptist, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. He discusses creeds in common, the Qumrân expectation of the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel, the similarities of Paul's writings and the expressions, "Sons of darkness" and "Sons of Light" in the Manual of Discipline.

"Samples of the language which Jesus spoke may now be read from the Dead Sea Scrolls." Paul, John the Baptist, and the author of John's Gospel had some direct contact with the Essene group, according to Dr. Howie. The Essenes hold the mediating position between Zoroastrianism and the New Testament. "Rejoicing in the unique revelation in Christ, the living church examines with new insight its historical origins." Here is a sane evaluation and nontechnical study of the Scrolls in relation to the church. Readable and brief. It could be recommended to any earnest layman.

2. Here, in less than 200 pages, is an introduction to the study and practice of theology. Not content with calling theology "The Queen of the Sciences," Dr. Johnson analyzes theology's scope, aims and limitations for an "age which is seriously concerned with method." He presents the "realm in which theology can both reign and serve" with her neighboring intellectual disciplines, Science and Philosophy.

Dr. Johnson's discussion of symbolic communication and the obligation to present truths involving human commitment shows him to have a broad, though carefully

disciplined, view of theology's crucial task. He writes in a sturdy, logical style which is both interesting and stimulating. It is surprising that so responsible a book as this can be read so easily. It will give much-needed perspective to anyone who needs to justify the ways of theology to men.

3. Six American, and six other preachers from South Africa, Malta, Hungary, South India, England and Geneva are represented in these sermons on Christian Unity. Sockman speaks of the "unity which capitalizes differences rather than . . . the separation which seeks to escape them." Dr. Marais of South Africa tells of the great new non-Christian forces on the march. "We must keep our divisions under the judgment of our unity," says Dr. Bosley as he draws a distinction between diversity and division in the church. Dr. Walker (Disciples) weighs Fellowship and Orthodoxy and stresses that "Right opinion can be held in the wrong spirit, thereby becoming actually irreligious." Bishop G. K. A. Bell (now deceased) reported on the Anglican-Methodist conversations.

In 160 pages Dr. Tobias has presented preaching on Unity from a variety of situations and points of view. The last five sermons, commented on above, seem the freshest. All are subject to rapid reading.

BAYARD CLARK

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**Islam and the Modern Age: An Analysis and an Appraisal.** By ILSE LICHTENSTADTER, with foreword by Sir Zafrullah Khan. New York: Bookman Associates, 1958. 228 pp. \$4.50.

"The task of understanding the soul of our eastern friends . . . is delicate and requires sensitivity, charity and tact." So says the author in her concluding "Epilogue." That she enjoys her three prerequisites no one will doubt. Yet somehow the book fails to satisfy, perhaps because it is too approximate and general and has a way of eluding some of the deeper reaches in its own wide summaries. Dr. Lichtenstadter defines her purpose as "an attempt to analyse the problems of the contemporary Muslim world in relation to their ancient foundations." Part 1 discusses these foundations: Part 2 "The Muslim and Modernism," with sections on things general, social, political and intellectual.

It is well to bring together the contemporary and the historical, but the author has a disconcerting way of injecting personal travelogue into critical analysis. Thus when she is expounding the social and economic order in the Hijaz at the time of Islam's genesis she cannot forbear to tell about how her car stalled in the middle of the Khyber Pass. Perhaps she sees ancient connections where modern issues are more relevant: "To the scholar steeped in ancient Arabian lore, the warfare between the Israelis and the Arabs in the Gaza strip and elsewhere has a familiar ring" (p. 39).

In certain points there seem to be strange inexactitudes. Sir Zafrullah Khan, though a highly respected member, is not "the present leader of the Ahmadiyyah." The second Caliph Bashir al-Din Ahmad is (p. 69). *Ijma'* does not have to do with authenticating traditions but is the source of law which "digests" *Ijtihad* (p. 75). In discussing *Jihad*, the author talks of *Mujtahids* but makes no mention of them in her treatment of *Ijtihad*, which is where they belong. The remarks on polygamy on p. 29 are somewhat out of date at least for Egypt and Tunis, while the interpretation on p. 200 of a passing incident in Pakistani political vicissitudes reads oddly in the light of the sequel. Muhammad Husain Haykal is noted on p. 50 as amongst intelligentsia who make no critical reference to the Pilgrimage. It is true he does



not do so in his *Life of Muhammad*, but a whole long work of his, *Fi-Manzil al-Wahy*, is devoted to this very theme. *Qiyas* finds no mention on p. 81 among the sources of law. Her opinion on Muhammad Abduh that his attempt to harmonize revelation and science "moves the western mind to pity rather than to admiration" is difficult to understand in the context and hardly agrees with her own generous estimates elsewhere.

These may be, in isolation, unimportant points. But in sum they leave the alert reader in some disquiet about exactness and depth. Quotations are not footnoted. But there can be no doubt that, as a general treatment by an observer with wide contacts and an irenic spirit, the book fulfills its end. The section on marriage and the family is particularly effective.

KENNETH CRAGG

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**Journey Into Self.** By M. ESTHER HARDING. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1956. ix-301 pp. \$5.00.

**Aion: Researches Into the Phenomenology of the Self.** By C. G. JUNG. Tr. by R. F. C. Hull. Bollingen Series XX: Collected Works of Jung, Vol. 9, Pt. II. New York: Pantheon Books, 1959. xi-344 pp. \$4.50.

These two books should be "noticed" in this "Mission to America" issue, even though space does not allow an adequate review. But both of them raise one issue so central to Christian concern that it calls for discussion here.

*Journey Into Self*, by M. Esther Harding, M.D., one of the leading Jungian analysts in this country, is a study of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* in the light of deep and broad knowledge of religious literature and of the ways of the soul as revealed in analytical experience. Those unfamiliar with Jung (this reviewer believes) will find it better to read first some works of Jung's disciples before tackling Jung himself. *Journey Into Self* has this advantage over systematic discussions of the Jungian "system": its material is familiar to many Christian readers (as to Dr. Harding herself) from childhood up. Study of the *Pilgrim* from this challenging unfamiliar angle is enriching—also disturbing; it throws into relief the significant new dimensions in which Jungian thought and inner experience are moving, yet shows an intimate continuity with and appreciation of Christian thought and feeling which should not be underestimated. Whether it is nevertheless "another gospel," the reader must decide.

Jung's *Aion* is in a different category. It should be read only by those already familiar with at least some of his less technical works (Dr. Bertine and Dr. Michalson have mentioned a few elsewhere in this issue.) Originally published in 1951, it is possibly Jung's major mature work; he himself has remarked that "if all his books were doomed to perish but one, he would want that one to be *Aion*."

In the first three chapters he summarizes (readably and clearly) his concepts of the ego, the shadow, the anima and animus—aspects of the psyche which are encountered in this order in any Jungian analysis. Then he comes to his present difficult subject, the Self—that larger, whole Self which includes the ego, the personal unconscious, and an individual relationship to the collective unconscious—the universal inner world of archetypal symbols. The realization of the Self (individuation) is rarely even approached, and only by those few who are capable of an arduous inner journey. The Self and the God-image he finds to be equivalent. As a psychologist,

he says he can treat of God only as a psychological reality. But to Jung and his school, psychological reality is the most real reality there is.

His central chapter is Chapter V, "Christ, a Symbol of the Self." The rest of the book treats of symbols and allegories of Christ (especially the Fish) as these were developed in Gnosticism, alchemy, astrology, and some of the mystics. For it was only by the heretics that exploration of the collective unconscious could be freely carried on, untrammelled by orthodox dogma.

Jung's thesis is that Christ is the leading "culture hero" of the West, the "still living myth," the central symbol of the Self. In early Christianity he adequately represented the Self in its wholeness, and brought a dynamic power of healing. However, his limitation from the beginning was his moral perfection; the destiny of a perfect man can only be crucifixion. He rejected Satan absolutely, although relative evil as well as good is inseparably part of the human self. Thus the Antichrist was split off from the Christ, becoming an absolute evil figure, seen in the apocalyptic visions as a formidable growing threat which would engulf the world with terrific destruction before Christ could return. The Christ-Antichrist split has increasingly dominated the Western psyche, till it has incarnated itself in the present perilously split world.

On the other hand there has been growing underground—emerging in the heresies, in modern literary figures, religious syncretists, and Jungian analysts—a growth in man's total consciousness, a learning that the realization of the Self must be a growth not toward perfection but toward completeness. Evil must be allowed its relative place, though kept under relative control by a morally earnest though not fanatically Puritan "journey into self." The Christ is, for present-day mankind, *not* the adequate healing symbol; salvation can be found only through symbols of completeness, symbols *beyond* Christ.

This same thesis is found by Dr. Harding to be shadowed forth already in the experiences of Bunyan's *Pilgrim* (who was of course himself), in the intrusions of trans-Christian symbols which Bunyan was not equipped to understand. And she states that Christ can save only the conscious self, not the unconscious; which means, of course, that he cannot save the total man.

Now it is an empirical fact that a tremendous amount of spontaneous symbolism arising in religious history and in literature gives support to this judgment on the Christian's Christ. Christian theologians continue to ignore it at their peril. But we may ask whether this *Christ who fails to save man* is the same Christ that was experienced by the early Christians and the mystics—or whether it is the collective image, a Christ both sentimentalized and overmoralistic, which the churches have built up as they lost touch with the firsthand experience. Jung's Christ-archetype seems to be something more dynamic and profound than this collective image; but is even the archetype the same thing as the living Christ?

E. H. L.

**Nature, Man, and Woman; A New Approach to Sexual Experience.** By ALAN W. WATTS. New York: Pantheon Books, Inc., 1958. xii-209 pp. \$3.95.

During the past twenty-five years Alan Watts has produced a dozen books relating the various Eastern religions to Western thinking. In his thirteenth volume he contrasts the Chinese Taoist's "seamless unity" of "spirit and nature, mind and body" with Christianity's "squeamish" suspicion of the human body.

Watts insists that the Christian must relinquish his traditional views of God as

"exclusively male" and the highest spiritual life as the renunciation of female sexuality. Not only have these views prevented him from making the "obvious symbolic correlation" between his attitudes toward nature and toward woman, but from integrating the sexual relationship into a total philosophy of life. Christianity thus not only challenges life's organic unity but implies the incompatibility of God and nature. True, the Christian heritage embodies several potential solutions to this basic rift between spirit and nature, but as long as it fails to express the pervasive sexuality of every human relationship, its world picture remains mechanical rather than organic.

Watts advocates a sexual union of man and nature in which the individual abandons all intellectuality—every idea, thought, opinion. Only then will the Christian "know" nature, Tao, and the "substance of things . . . in the warm vagueness of immediate contact." Only then will he realize that sexual "techniques" or "practices" may be viewed as "sacraments, the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." And to enhance this realization, Watts, in his final pages, describes graphically several specific sexual techniques for attaining "the contemplative and inactive mode of intercourse" requisite for total spiritual and physical union.

Perhaps the current Beat Generation's fondness for Eastern thought assures this book of a favorable, if limited, reception. But those more favorably inclined toward the Judeo-Christian tradition are likely to find both meaningless and unedifying Watts' definition of life as "a dissolving moment in which there is nothing to grasp and no one to grasp it." Nor are they likely to accept without a smile his insistence that the Taoist's dispassionate control of mind and body during the love act will "heal the confusion and frustration of our marital and sexual relations." Actually, the author's misuse of Freudian psychology, unimaginative imagery, and semantically painful puns ("smother love," "holy deadlock") are more conducive to *nirvana* than is his logic.

BEN SIEGEL

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**Life and Times of Bishop Isaac Lane.** By HORACE C. SAVAGE. Nashville, Tenn.: National Publication Company, P. O. Box 3233, 1958. 240 pp. \$3.90.

With remarkable accuracy, despite a lack of much dependable source material, Horace Savage has told the story of Isaac Lane, fifth bishop of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (now called Christian Methodist Episcopal Church) and founder of Lane College, Jackson, Tennessee. Born out of wedlock to a slave and fathered by her master, Cullen Lane, Isaac was to bear his father's family name and bring honor to it. Slaves born in 1835 were not expected to be free people, hence no education was to be thought of, nor indeed was anything other than slavery to be expected for such as Isaac.

Separation of Northern and Southern Methodism brought about an intense missionary program for the Negroes of the South under the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, following 1840, and Isaac Lane was one of the first of the Negroes to grow to a place of recognition under that program. As it was clear that these Methodist converts were capable of developing their own leadership, Southern Methodism assisted in the establishment of their denomination. Bishops Capers and McTyeire gave encouragement to this development and began a tradition of support for the new organization which continues to this day in the parent denomination.

Lane's poverty, lack of education, and even his illegitimate birth, did not hamper this "Old Roman," as he was affectionately called, and he lived to be 102. Buried in a "white" cemetery in Jackson, Tennessee, he was thus accorded an honor from Southerners which few Negroes have had. He had been born in Andrew Jackson's day and was a personification of all the history of the American Negro until his death in 1937. The church he loved and served was a characteristic of that history and thus his story and it are united. The Negro in America cannot be understood unless this part of the picture is examined.

E. S. B.

**The Living Church.** By LYNN HAROLD HOUGH. St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1959. \$2.50.

When Lynn Harold Hough preaches, writes, or converses, his impact as a churchman is primal. In this volume you are at once introduced to a vital defense of positions he holds in the current theological discussion. His gentlemanly approach to the controversies in theology by-passes the controversy and moves the reader into a direct consideration of the issues. Preaching is the "Living Voice"; intellectual respectability is the "Understanding Mind"; Christian experience is the "Commanding Conscience"; strong persons have had the living church put "Steel Into the Wills of Men"; the grace of God assures "The Church of the Loving Heart"; the churchman is in a partnership when he belongs to "The Church of the Creator and Sustainer of the World"; the fellowship with Christ is to be found in "The Church of the Christ Who Lived With Men"; the eternal experience of salvation is to be found in "The Church of the Divine Redemption"; and the moral imperative is in "The Church of the Perpetual Presence."

His book is, in a sense, a summary of his preaching. He does not digress to battle with Kierkegaard, but with some delightful brushes he makes it clear that he will not give much room to explanations of "Christianity in terms of his own unhealthy and abnormal experiences in an age of abnormal experiences." There are good flashes of wit; there are some great expressions of wisdom—but most of all, there is warm experience.

E. S. B.

**Religion as Creative Insecurity.** By PETER A. BERTOCCHI. New York: Association Press, 1958. xiii-128 pp. \$2.50.

For the serious student of contemporary Christian affairs, Dr. Bertocci has here challenged the existentialist nay-sayers and the peace-of-mind cult in an honest and penetrating essay. At a time when political negativism and the paralyzing facts of atomic war have combined to frustrate free discussion of ultimate truth, Dr. Bertocci asks us to accept the inevitable bitter destiny of insecurity as the wisdom of God. Religion must not be allowed to become "the opiate of the people." Religion at its best is strenuous creative thought and action within the context of an insecure world. And the greatest power is still the Power of Love.

Dr. Bertocci's discussion includes four sections, headed as follows: Religion in the Search of Maturity, Religion as the Pursuit of Creativity by God and Man, Religion as Creative Insecurity, Religion as Worthwhile Suffering. As a Personalist, Dr. Bertocci resists vague pantheisms and ontological identifications of God and Man. While man can never attain to the omnipotence of his Creator, he may properly

aspire to sharing the purposes of God in his creative insecurity. In so doing, he becomes blessed. This state of blessedness, "not as the world gives," is the reward. "Creative insecurity" may very well become a watchword and a rallying point for our scattered forces in an age of anxiety.

LEONARD B. BEACH

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**Mystery and Meaning in the Christian Faith.** By HUGH T. KERR. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1958. 51 pp. (pap.) \$1.00.

This small book contains Professor Kerr's lectures at the Alumni Conference of Emmanuel College, Toronto, in 1957. We may be happy indeed that these lectures were printed, for they contain in only a few words some profoundly stirring theology. The Princeton Seminary professor cautions against a too-complete absorption of interest on the part of Protestants in the revelation of the mystery, to some degree ignoring the significance of mystery itself. Over against this he argues for a re-emphasis on the Biblical tension between mystery and meaning. He feels that the apologetic task of these decades is to make the faith relevant to those for whom the previous rationalistic structures of thought no longer speak significantly. ". . . Nothing is so meaningless to the contemporary generation, which no longer feels at home in the world, than structures of meaning which ignore or side-step the manifold mystery of existence." This consideration leads naturally into a chapter, "The New Symbolism and the Rediscovery of Mystery."

This is exciting reading, for the author is urbane, contemporary, as well as historically and philosophically exacting.

KENDIG BRUBAKER CULLY

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**Christian Science Today: Power, Policy, Practice.** By CHARLES S. BRADEN. Dallas, Texas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1958. xvi-432 pp. \$5.95.

Dr. Braden has written a full-length study of Mary Baker Eddy's movement up to date. He aims at scholarly objectivity, notably lacking in most writings on this subject. He properly admits his own "biases" (chiefly, dislike of an autocratic church organization which suppresses facts), but he deeply respects the values in this faith. He canvassed the copious primary and secondary source material that was available, but (despite sincere efforts) he was not admitted to the archives of the Mother Church.

Dr. Braden treats the origins and the founder briefly, giving most of his space to the development of the powerful organization since her death, the controversies between the hierarchy and dissenting individuals and minorities, evolution in thought and practice, development of doctrine about Mrs. Eddy. Some dissenting Christian Scientists (e.g. Studdert-Kennedy) shared the founder's distrust of strong organization; and while admiring Mrs. Eddy greatly, wished not to eliminate the human imperfections from her portrayal.

E. H. L.

Charles Francis Potter, veteran "humanist" historian of religion, has brought out *The Great Religious Leaders*, a revised and enlarged edition of *The Story of Religion* (Simon and Schuster, 1958, \$7.50). Besides the better-known religious

founders he includes Akhenaton, Patrick, Nikon of Russia, and the Americans Roger Williams, Edwards, Channing, Joseph Smith, William Miller, Ingersoll, Quimby, Mary Baker Eddy. He has added a chapter on the Qumrân "Teacher of Righteousness."

Meridan Books (17 Union Square West, New York 3, N.Y.) sends us *The Faith of the Church*, by Karl Barth: "A Commentary on the Apostles' Creed according to the Catechism of Calvin." (Paper \$1.25, cloth \$3.50.) This is a small book but "a work calculated to disturb and deepen the faith of those who imagine themselves already Christian." Includes full bibliography of Barth's works.

The Hymn Society of America (297 Fourth Ave., New York 10) has issued many valuable papers, brief studies of hymnody and hymnologists ancient, medieval and modern. The latest, a longer study, is No. XXIII: *To Praise God: The Life and Work of Charles Winsfred Douglas*, by Leonard Ellinwood and Anne Woodward Douglas (\$1.00). This relates the life of an outstanding church musician and hymnologist of the Episcopal Church, both listing his own works and supplying a checklist of the extensive Douglas Collection (his private library) now in the Washington Cathedral Library.

Hans A. de Boer, a Christian businessman and journalist who had served time in prison in World War II for his pacifism, traveled first through South Africa and later through India, Communist China, Japan, Australia, the United States. He observed and talked with both leaders and common folk on the problems of race, class, international and religious conflict, and the Church's attitudes toward them. The book, *The Bridge Is Love* (Eerdmans, \$4.50), is his readable and moving travel diary, which ran through six editions in one year in Germany. Foreword by Martin Niemöller. "My constant concern," says the author, "has been the question what it means to be a Christian today."

Alec R. Allenson, Inc., has called to our attention *The Torch Bible Commentaries*—small handy studies by British scholars, of which two are *The Gospel According to St. John*, by Alan Richardson (\$3.00), and *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, by John A. Allan (\$2.50).

Robert L. Eddy, a Congregational pastor in Rhode Island, has compiled and edited a collection, *Pastoral Prayers Throughout the Year* (Scribner, \$3.50). These are arranged according to the church year and special occasions, together with a section on "special and general pastoral prayers." The selection includes a wide variety and is taken from well-known leaders in the various denominations.

*Soldiers of the Word*, by John M. Gibson (Philosophical Library, \$3.75), is the stirring story of the American Bible Society from its inception. "Its Scriptures, of which some half billion have been distributed in all, have been given to service men and women in every major war anywhere in the world since its founding in 1816. . . . the Bible, in whole and in part, has been translated into well over a thousand languages and dialects. . . . Its workers are included among the great Christian martyrs."

E. H. L.





